THE COUNTRY CHURCH IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

EDMUND DE S. BRUNNER

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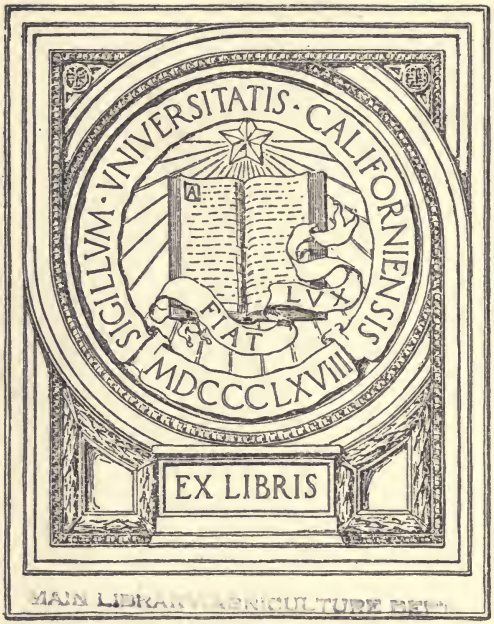

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THE COUNTRY CHURCH IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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Union Theological Seminary

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TO

MY MOTHER AND MY FATHER

This Book is Dedicated

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PREFACE

This book makes no claim to omniscience nor to a clear view of the future. But one thing is certain. The Great War has jostled every human organization out of its routine. It has applied the acid test to every social group. It has created new standards of usefulness by which men judge. It has effected social changes so revolutionary that others must follow in their train, and the cumulative effect of these and the reactions springing from them will be felt permanently in the lives of men.

The greatest need of men in times like these is for the spiritual leadership which will root and ground them in those principles that will give the strength adequate for the new tasks of our new day.

The natural custodian of such assets, the natural inspiration of such leadership is the Church. To fulfil its function the Church must recognize the effect of these changes and must be ready to change with them, for progressive change is growth. It must be more than a custodian of tradition, a treasure-house of sacred ritual, a storehouse of biblical knowledge, a depository of doctrine. The Church must be

a living organism, vibrant with the life and purposes of its Founder, aggressive in prosecuting His plan of world domination, and most of all, if it is to do this much, it must also be in the fore of the world's thought, a fearless pioneer blazing a trail of truth that shall become a highway for the nations, foreseeing and interpreting the changing aspects of life to the world of men, having no aim but truth, no motive but service, no law but love, no master but Jesus, no goal but the Commonwealth of God.

The church of the country has been limited in its life and function, yet from the country must continue to come leadership, else we shall breed upon the soil a peasant class of landless tenants. The War has revealed the need of the social gospel and the efficacy of the social program founded upon that gospel. This has been true in city and country, in industry and agriculture. There were stirrings of the new era of democracy in community relationships before the War brought on the birth-pangs of the new day. No one can foresee the future in detail. There will be a new world order now that the War is won. The plans for reconstruction give promise, as does the very care given to the men of our Army and Navy—and even to prisoners of war—of a social interest by governments undreamed of by yesterday's statesmen.

What then may be the tasks of the country church, how it must apply the principles suggested in the high noon of the new day, no one now knows. But the pathways to guide in the dim light of early morning are clear and well defined. They were worked out here and there in the night. They are ready for our feet.

So it is that this book is offered, not as a complete treatise nor a fully charted course, but as one of a series of books that must come from the souls and hearts of men who are doing what they can in the tasks they see before the country church in the new world order.

Some of this material has already appeared in pamphlet form. Chapter VII was published by the Missionary Education Movement under the title "A Rural Community House," and is here used by permission of that organization.

EDMUND DES. BRUNNER.

New York, January 13, 1919.

I

IN THE ROUND OF DAILY RURAL MINISTRY

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER I

IN THE ROUND OF DAILY RURAL MINISTRY

I have been a country pastor. I ask no greater claim to distinction. Stand with me on the crest of that favorite hill in my first charge. Away to the left stretch fields white already to the harvest, broken here and there by small woods rich in the foliage of the maturing summer. Yonder at the foot of the hill lies the little town. It seldom figures in the news of the world; it contributes little to the wealth of the nation; but I view it with affection. It was part of my field. There is a home, and there, and there, whose occupants looked to me, their pastor, to supply a definite need in their lives. There is a house that hides the tragedy of a living sorrow. There is a home that exerts a powerful but little suspected influence. There is the school—what will it and its youthful country lads and lassies mean to the big workaday world some years hence? There is a flash, a rumble, and the interurban trolley has sped into the village and out of it. Farther away, beyond the trolley line, are more farms, stretching away to the distant hills.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH

The westering sun is slowly sinking to its rest. Its rays strike the high steeple of a country church, and once again, as in the days of Constantine, the cross is seen emblazoned in the sky. "In this sign conquer." The vision fades with the sunlight, but its message remains. It is a moment of rededication to the Hero of the Cross, whose Kingdom is yet to come in rural America.

There is need for such a vision, for the field is a typical one—small and not growing. Denominational prejudice, superstition, cramped lives, narrow outlook, confront any country pastor. There are thousands of similar situations in America, lighted here and there by their bright spots, and in the midst of these conditions, by means of everyday toil and typical experiences, the Kingdom of Heaven is being wrought out.

Directly behind us lies the farm from which I have just come—anything but an attractive home. Its rooms are low and small, its few pictures are gaudy and bizarre. When I entered the combination living, sewing, and dining room, an ancient stove sent forth both smoke and heat. In a box on the window-sill two doves were cooing. Two children with a spaniel between them were bending over their books on a dirty, crippled settee near the stove. Under

a table was a sick dog, and here and there a cat might be seen. Upstairs was the person I came to see—a young woman. She lay on a cot with coarse blankets thrown over her. The one tiny window was closed. Her voice sounded far away. She spoke and breathed with difficulty, and her cheeks were flushed with fever. It was diphtheria, but no advance warning had been given me. The poor girl tramped away to the mill two miles distant each morning and returned tired each evening. It was the little town's one industry, and she gave it her best, in order that from her meager wages she might retain a mere pittance on which to clothe and amuse herself. The rest of her wages went to the father, a cheerful but hopeless man, who worked tirelessly and in vain to make his acres yield enough to support his family and pay the high rate of interest on a mortgage that was too large for the real value of the farm.

You say it was a case for the charitable women of the Ladies' Aid Society. Yes, perhaps, but more than that. It needed more even than the cultivation of a social sense that would observe the quarantine. This man is one of a large class. He is the victim of economic conditions—poor, with small hope of ever being less poor. His whole effort goes into wresting a living from the soil with his outworn methods.

Together with the tenant farmer, he is the marginal man of the community. For its institutions, its schools, its churches, its spirit he cares nothing. They are out of sympathy with him and he with them. They give him nothing; he gives them less. A part of the community, he is yet none of it. He cares nothing for its advancement. He is a barrier across the path of its progress. And yet he is a man, he and his family have souls, relationships, duties which must be discovered to them. Charitable aid? Yes, but this experience goes far deeper—it goes down to one of the secret sores in American rural life, a sore which is rotting it at the core, a sore which needs the healing touch of the Christ as direly as ever the leper craved it in the days of his flesh. Even in the same community there were others in this condition. The next neighbor of this man shared his plight, his wife a hunchback and a drug fiend.

But from these homes and worse my mind goes to another, a visit to which was always counted among one of my experiences. It was the home of a prosperous man, who combined a small farm with one of the old-fashioned water power mills, so few of which survive. The interurban trolley went by the door of these people, and it seemed to infect them with the

urban spirit. There were four children in the home, and all were as proud as their parents of the success the family had won. The table at this home was a mighty chaos of unintelligent feeding, the despair of weak digestions, and in this they had retained the spirit of the country. But the city had its hold upon these people. Their secondhand automobile took them thither. The oldest boy arose at five every morning to go to his work in the city's mill. The daughters studied Latin, but not domestic science. They mimicked the most bold of the city styles, and often the pastor's wife was called upon to give judgment on some of the material that, with rural deftness, was sewed into creations—oh, such creations! The talk at the table was of the last week's movies, the last prize fight, the coming attraction at the park or theater.

Yet about these people lay beautiful fields, fine woods, sparkling streams. They had splendid live stock and a nightly oratorio from the feathered choir that far surpassed the efforts of any comic opera chorus. "Having eyes they see not, ears have they, but they hear not." The glamor of the city had cast a spell over all the members of the household. They thought in its terms. They looked forward to the time when they would live there. They were urbanized.

It is the old question of making people see the glory of country life. It is not alone a question of better living. These people have the means to live better where they are than they can in any city in America. But they will not. Hence an invitation from them did not mean merely the physical pleasure of an indescribable rural banquet. It meant that I was face to face with the problem of showing these folk a vision I myself saw, a vision of a new rural life in which they could be leaders—a life of prosperity, spirituality, real recreation, true knowledge. It meant that I must try to redirect their ambitions, and at the same time combat their grandmother's superstitions. Such a family calls for the bringing of their mental and social thought up to the average thought of the day, at the same time showing them a spiritual ideal they have not as yet grasped. The distance between life as they conceive it and life as it really is, is great; their self-satisfied complacence, tragic. True, measured by the city's superficial aims and demands, the life of their country community is bare. How, oh how, to disclose the possibilities of a still larger, freer, better life opening for their unseeing eyes at their very doorsteps—that is the problem.

More than any other, this family drove me to my garden. There amidst the tasseled corn,

the graceful carrots, the shining beans, and all the other good, green, living things that I had planted, tended, and watched grow with such jealous care, I tried to solve the puzzle, together with her whom God has given to make life possible—the mistress of the rural manse. Oh, for a few more kindred spirits in the same community! Surely then things would have moved. I became impatient, but as I listened to the lisping of the wind as it kissed the tops of the growing things about me, I lifted my eyes unto the hills of home from whence my help came, as they spoke to me of the power of Him whose we all are.

It all comes back to the problem of leadership —the same problem the Master, and afterward His apostles, had to face. Man forms his philosophy of life from the experience he acquires in earning his daily bread, and, because of the economic stress under which many a tiller of the soil works, cynicism and pessimism about the things of the earthly kingdom dwell side by side with a pious hope for salvation from the sins and troubles of the flesh and a place in the new world, that other world of golden gates and pearly streets. In those who feel in this way, one finds no capacity for leadership. One of my bitterest experiences illustrated this. The community was offered a

three-day winter Chautauqua, which was to be tried in small communities for the first time that year. Not one of the faculty or of the board of the local school would serve on the committee of twenty, which was necessary in order to secure this community benefit. We failed for the lack of four names. And yet there was a bright side to the picture, and with two pleasant experiences I will close this commonplace chronicle.

There was a baseball team in our community and the knowledge of my career on a college diamond preceded me to my charge.

"Say, 'Revrand,' what would you say to playing with us boys this year?" Thus I was greeted one day near the post-office. "Revrand" said he could probably manage it, concealing delight under those cautious words. And so I did play with the splendid young fellows through two seasons. There was some talk of proselyting, to be sure, but that died down. The boys formed the habit of holding their business meetings in the parsonage. Formerly they had met over a saloon. One of the best of them became my assistant scoutmaster. Two years later he entered college. Today he is in religious work. I value the friendships of these boys, every one, but baseball has brought me a still greater friendship, that of a country doctor.

I met him first at the bedside of a sick parishioner, and it was there that his unusualness was disclosed in the words he spoke. Soon after we met in baseball uniforms, and I began to learn of the wonderful work he had done for the young men of his community, for the high school of his village, as president of its school board, and in many other ways. There was a social center in the school of that little town, and a manual training department that had won county-wide recognition; these two and other improvements were traceable to his patient efforts. He was a country doctor because he believed that he was called of God to that work. He brought to his task scientific methods, high idealism, unwavering consecration. Until we met he knew little of the country life movement as such. He is an excellent example of unrealized, isolated, but successful rural leadership.

I think of one other man as I write. He has had a hard struggle, but he has won. Self made, but for the aid of short courses at the agricultural college of his state in his later years, he has grasped the scientific, modern aspect, not of farming alone, but of life itself. His viewpoint makes him a man among men. Like the doctor, he is often misunderstood and frequently laughed at, even as the Master was

once laughed to scorn. But quietly and smilingly he pursues his way. It was due to his aid that the parsonage garden "made good." It is due to his inspiration that a young college man has been started on his career as a successful farmer. In this man's fine old country home there is every sanitary convenience, there is every indication of refinement and culture, coupled with the fine, sincere simplicity of the country. His daughters at college were leaders in Young Women's Christian Association work. He has made them love him and his work in the open country, not only by affection natural to a father, but by a sense of honor and fairness, which makes him pay liberally when any of them do work for him that is outside of the usual line of their duties. A call at this home was always one of my most pleasant experiences. This man is one of the new type of farmer that is coming. Gradually his success is winning the respect of the neighborhood and without any effort his influence grows. On such as he depends the future of American rural life. Farming is to him a profession. The land is holy land. Through his daily work he expresses his religion and the man who does that is ever triumphant.

It is a great fight that is on—this to make rural America a part of the Kingdom of our

Lord. The rural clergy are in the thick of it. We all have our unusual, our bitter, our curious, our satisfying, or our ludicrous experiences. And now the War has brought new challenges to service, greater opportunities for effective ministry, and vaster demands on strength and energy than ministers have yet known. It has brought new experiences and great changes, but the principles that will solve the problems of the reconstruction are the same eternal principles with which we have been working. Human nature is still human nature, and it is these everyday folks that must be lifted into the new democracy. But, after all, the experiences which mean most, tell most, and go deepest are those of the everyday life we live among our people—the meeting with just such men and women as I have tried to introduce to you. Each and every home has its heartaches and its joys, its struggles, its defeats, and its victories, and they all go to make up the great power, force, state, which we call American rural life. To transform this, to fuse these many types into one great people for the Lord, is the task of the Master's disciple. It is a great task and a hard one, one beset by difficulties, discouragements, dangers, but one in which, through the power of His spirit and by the sign of His cross, right will conquer all. The

great day is coming and the sum total of the commonplace experiences of the present rural workers will be one of the assets of that more glorious rural America upon which God's sun will some day shine.

II

CURRENT WORLD IDEALS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

CHAPTER II

CURRENT WORLD IDEALS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Amidst all the welter of war, with its social dislocations of thousands of families who have changed industrial occupations, its complete absorption of millions of the country's best young men, its feverish demands for munitions and food, its anxiety for faith and for loved ones, its sorrow and its crime, there is yet a wider spread of idealism in the world than ever before. Just as the 20,000,000 holders of Liberty Bonds mean that forty times as many individuals as held any bonds in times of peace have made such investments at the call of the nation, so millions whose interests were limited to the concern of their neighborhood and state and who three years ago gave scant heed to what happened in Siberia, Russia, or the Balkans, today have formed an ideal for the world in which they live. It is an ideal which has tied itself up with religion. It bears upon it the stamp of the Master of men. It has been voiced by the prophet of our modern age in that sentence, "The world must be made safe

for democracy." This embodies a League of Nations enforcing world peace, self-determination for subject peoples, and equal opportunity for every land. Never before have the ideals of social prophets, preachers, and dreamers through the ages seemed so close to fulfilment.

How, then, may these ideals be made effective in the local community? This must be done, for fundamental democracy means that no one shall be left out of reach of the opportunities accorded to all others.

To have a successful world civilization requires more than the defeat of the four autocracies. That has happened. God has never allowed the cause of liberty to be crushed. But we must conquer not only by the force of arms and resources. We must prove the superiority of democracy, man for man. We must show greater unity of purpose, closer cooperation, more efficient management, greater powers of organization, keener foresight, more genius, larger capacities for sacrifice, a surer grasp on the eternal ethical principles, and a deeper perception of the essentials of real progress. Unless democracy can do these things better than autocracy, it is not safe for the world, and its cause will eventually be lost in the long process of world evolution.

We must admit that we are deficient, and

plan to make our ideals locally effective, lest the War leave us exhausted, without a program and lacking the strength to hammer one out of the raw stuff of life. To have a successful civilization or a successful democracy we must secure successful and efficient little civilizations scattered through the land. In so far as our interdependence permits, we must have socially sustaining communities. Each must have equal opportunities with all others in working out its destiny and making its fullest possible contribution to the vast sum total of our national and world life.

In the working out of this ideal as it comes down to each local rural community the church can play an important part, as it is often the leading social agency. It remains then to consider certain social weaknesses to which the church can bring its power in effective ministry for actualizing the ideals of democracy and Christian brotherhood.

"How long have you lived on this farm?" a home mission secretary asked a weary-eyed slip of a woman who had answered his knock.

"About six months," came the dull-toned reply.

"Do you expect to stay here?"

"Lord, mister, we don't stay nowhere. We have had twenty-six farms since Jim and me

settled down twenty-five years ago."—Hardly settled down!

This side section of life from a Southern investigation mirrors a great leprous sore in our rural life—tenancy. We must not let the War blind our eyes to the increase of this evil in America. For the last four decades the rate of operating farm owners has steadily decreased. In answering the appeals of a needy world and a fighting nation the farmers have stood as one, but that has not solved the problem. If a land hunger has been the root cause of Russia's revolutions and counter-revolutions and her collapse as an ally in the cause of world democracy, let us be up and at our problem long before the crisis state is reached.

The problem is familiar. Our system of land tenure in America is atrocious. Leases are for the most part of one year's duration. The tenant tries to get all he can from the soil and put back as little as possible. If he fails on one farm, he knows he can move elsewhere, so he feels less interest than the owner in the community institutions such as the church, school, and grange. He has no sense of a permanent home and the responsibility which that means. Every survey proves this. The former owner, who, either to secure the benefits of town life for himself and his family or to

take advantage of the rising price of land, has formed new associations and interests, forgets that even absentee landlords have community obligations.

It was this situation that had caused alarm even before the War began to call attention to the fundamental importance of a prosperous agriculture for the sake of national safety. Now that the driving force of war needs is dissipated, America will have to face and solve this problem. If agriculture is not to produce a peasant class, there must be opportunity for the average man to own an average-sized farm. "Woe unto them that lay field to field till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth" (Isa. 5:8). The penalty for this social sin is decreased yield (Isa. 5:10).

The remedy is not for any one agency to effect. It calls for cooperation. The part of the country church is to do its full share in helping individuals and their communities to realize the abundant life. Thus owners will be held to the soil. It can also agitate for and inspire its members for civic service in bringing about a rural building and loan association, which will apply to farm conditions the well-known practice of these organizations. This will enable the young man beginning life, the

tenant, or the mortgagee to make some progress in owning his farm and equipment. Every minister should be able to advise in regard to the uses to be made of the Federal Farm Loan system and to urge its extension in such ways as will better assist tenants to become owners.

In 1916 the producers in a certain section were shipping tomatoes for fifteen and twenty cents a peach basket, and consumers in a nearby city were paying ten cents for a strawberry box, and from seven to ten times as much for a half bushel. Time and again truck farmers have plowed under peas and beans because it did not pay to pick them and bring them to market. The potato scarcity of 1917 produced numerous profiteers. Instances could be multiplied. The problem of an adequate distribution of food and a fair profit to producer, to middleman when he is necessary, and to retailer, together with a fair price to the consumer, is an acute one. Not to solve it would be to prove false to democracy. The Christian who would avoid grappling with it should observe the social effects of the Non-Partisan Farmer League of North Dakota, and the vast growth of the movement that had its start in the outraged sense of justice on the part of those who had been refused what they believed to be a necessity to protect them from the economic op-

pression of private firms—state-owned grain elevators.

There are some very clear ethical principles involved which the church can preach. Profiteering and similar practices are nothing short of "seeing a brother in need" and yet shutting up the "bowels of compassion from him." Those who labor are worthy of their hire, but not of more than they are worth at the expense of others' rights. The church can do more than preach. It is perfectly possible to organize in the church, or through the church in the community, clubs for the cooperative marketing of products, perhaps selling to clubs of consumers in the city or in a city church.

Similarly, buying clubs for the cooperative purchase of seed, twine, fertilizer, and other necessities can be organized. They have proved most effective in many places. Europe's agricultural system is based upon them, and the church membership, as well as its executives, is very frequently represented on the boards of control. "In fact in Ireland, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Hungary, and to some extent also in France, Russia, and the Balkan states, the ministers of the church have been of the utmost assistance. In many countries their aid at times has been indispensable, while in some countries the great advance of agricultural

organization has been materially due to their influence."[1]

All of these social results have their religious reactions.

So the War has intensified other aspects of the rural problem. The farmer's son who learns of the vocational guidance and redirection of the wounded, who attends the classes held in the Army under official or Y M C A auspices and sees their direct relation to life, will, in the name of a Christian democracy, demand new things from the country school. After he has come in touch with the recreational work of the Y M C A and caught the scope and spirit of the service performed by the government Commission on Training Camp Activities he will demand satisfaction in rural life not known before and moral standards that will be more wholesome than those to which some communities are used. He will demand that the Church take an emphatic stand for these things. Furthermore, he who has seen the obliteration of denominational lines in Army and Navy in a common loyalty to Jesus Christ, he who has observed the expression of religion in terms of service, the giving of a cup of water to the thirsty, a bar of chocolate to the wounded, the visiting of the sick or the prisoner, will

[1] Gill, "Social Effects of Rural Cooperation."

demand the great essentials of Christian life and service from the Church. The War has sounded the death knell of rural sectarianism. Rural life has ever favored clear, deep thinking in those vital individual relations of the soul to the universe. Its individualism has permitted the survival of sectarian difference. The socializing experiences of the War will bring a wholesome, broadened attitude toward religion. The leaders of our churches, city and country alike, for the next decades have been wearing the khaki and the blue.

There is no need to go further. The War revealed with startling clearness the efficacy of the rural life program that had been determined in the decade before the War began. Every feature of that program is essential to rural democracy, to the abundant life in the country. Every feature of it must be thought through anew in the light of the world that is to be and its needs. To this high task the leadership of the country church is called by the nation and in the name of the Kingdom of God.

III

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CHAPTER III

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As the country life movement grows in popularity, especially under the impetus of war conditions which drew the attention of the world to the basic importance of agricultural prosperity, there have arisen those who, grasping the urgency of the problems to be faced, have demanded many things of the country church and its pastor. Their voices are raised in support of the idea that the rural minister should found community betterment associations, provide social centers, organize banks, corn clubs, cow-testing associations, and the like, and that he should teach scientific agriculture and stock raising. This would be turning the minister into a whole County Farm Bureau and would be prostituting the forces he is to mold, the spiritual task which gives him prestige, power, influence. On the other hand, country ministers could be named who have done all these things most efficiently and done them without loss, but rather with gain for the spiritual interests of their communities. But that is no reason why every country pastor

should be called upon to do exactly the same things. Fields differ. Opportunities vary. What is the real function of the country church, and hence of its pastor, in relation to the Kingdom of God?

The answer to that problem lies within God's Word. But it is not bound up in a few "proof texts." God pity us if we go to his sacred Word for quarry to support this or that contention. Rather we must seek to see God's processes working out through the social progress and national experiences of Israel and read our New Testaments with hearts eager to catch the eternal principles of the truth that makes men free. Only so can we remove the bias we might otherwise show in such an inquiry.

Going then to the Bible in that open-minded spirit, we are surprised to find that Israel had a rural problem to which the prophets gave considerable attention. Isaiah was a country life seer, though a city man. He inveighed against the laying of field to field by the rich and the consequent forcing of the poor from the country into Jerusalem—the city (Isa. 5:8). In the new civilization which he foresaw, these conditions would be righted and those who built houses would dwell in them and eat the fruit of their plantings rather than another (Isa. 65: 17–23). Rural material prosperity was a fre-

quent concern of the Lord, if we may judge by the laws of Israel. The salary of the traveling Levite, the rural pastor of the day, is provided for. Economic betterment is aimed at in the provision for the assistance of the poor (Deut. 24:19 *seq.*), and so on through so many passages that a skilled professor in an Eastern theological seminary is engaged in a volume upon the rural legislation of the Bible.

Recreation and adequate social life, another plank in the modern rural community program, was a feature given its place in the life of Bible times. The prophets speak of the joy of the harvest festivities (Isa. 9:3). Most of the feasts of the Jews, which played so large a part in the social life of their day, were agricultural in their purport. Another prophet, with a fine touch worthy of a predecessor of the Master, foresaw that the streets of the holy city "shall be full of boys and girls playing" (Zech. 8:5). The Master observed the children at their play and drew lessons therefrom and entered so heartily into the recreational customs of his own time that he was called by his enemies "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber" (Matt. 11: 16–19). Ever did he use recreation as a means of preaching, as an opportunity by word and deed to drive home the applications of the Gospel, and here lies the key to the Church's

use of play, recreation, and similar interests, tied up so closely, as they are, with the moral purposes and sanctions which control lives.

Other things press upon us. How comforting it is, in struggling with rural health problems, to go back to that splendid health legislation contained in Leviticus! Would that some of the provisions of that ancient code for rural Israel were adhered to in the twentieth century! The Christian task of rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's can be best performed in the minister's giving his *citizen's* service to his community. The rising tide of democracy and social progress, long felt in the world's centers of population, and a revolutionary force ever since the Gospel of Christ came to a needy world, finds its interpretation today as it has ever done in such passages as Paul's great declaration, that in Jesus "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free" (Gal. 3: 28). The stress in home life today between parents who have been trained in an individualistic, relatively undeveloped age and their children who have been born into our age of commercialism and who feel the push and urge of our social movements, recalls the apostle's words, "Husbands, love your wives"; "Children, obey your parents"; "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath" (Eph. 5:22—

6:4), and emphasizes the obligation of the Church, as a kingdom function, to help make good homes.

The new pedagogy and the new psychology press upon us with the demand for graded Bible schools, even in the country, and we discover that though Jesus never knew these two words he practiced all they call for. To the farmer he spoke in terms of farm life; to the spiritually and physically thirsty woman in Samaria, in terms of her daily task of drawing water; to the learned theologian, Nicodemus, in terms of philosophy; to the fishermen, whose attention he gained by such a materially prosperous thing as a large catch, he spoke in terms of fishing for men. He graded his instruction.

And so we could go on through the more familiar features of the program of any church, the training for service, the stimulation of missionary spirit, the development of right ideals, the fostering of spiritual growth, but there is no need. We are more accustomed to this work than to the other, but those who oppose the entire program have before them the task of rediscovering their Bibles. Time and time again in conventions a delegate will arise and announce the solution of all the problems of the country church. It is to be found in obedience to the injunction, "Preach the Gospel." How

is that to be done? Lift up your eyes to the mission fields and behold how medicine, education, agriculture, engineering, and other sciences are molded by the churches into effective avenues of preaching the Gospel. No missionary would claim to be ordained as a well-digger, but John G. Paton convinced the heathen of the New Hebrides of his sincerity by digging a well in a time of great drought, thus "bringing the rain out of the ground," as the chief said. Rather effective preaching! In the mission field good housing, proper recreation and social life, better standards of living, economic betterment, and a host of other things are attendant upon the preaching of the Gospel and are inspired by the Church. We need not be afraid that God will not bless similar efforts in the home field. We must realize that to "do all to the glory of God" includes raising pigs, growing wheat, and a host of other necessary things.

But all this seems to nullify the statements in the beginning of this chapter. The difficulty disappears when the conclusions thus far indicated are viewed in the light of three words from the New Testament which are pertinent. One is the text of Jesus' first sermon—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18, 19). The Master's first comment on the text was this, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The second is the ordination charge Jesus delivered to the apostles before sending them out, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:7, 8). And the third comes from the pen of Paul, who wrote, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).

The great danger in listening to the jargon of voices arising today is that the country preacher who is really trying to get the best results from his field will begin to do so many things that, in the doing of them, both the cause of the action and the goal aimed at will be lost. The preeminent thing for the country minister and the country church is to preach the good tidings, the Gospel of Christ. This is the power of God unto salvation—individual and social, in city and country and world. This is the mainspring of our idealism, our visions, our service. Other things will follow as fruits

of the Spirit. But the Gospel is to be preached so that it will be glad tidings to hungry hearts. The minister must remember that he is not addressing Jews of the first century, nor are his hearers concerned with the same problems of ritual, doctrine, and practice that loomed large in the minds of the early converts from paganism. The Gospel must be ever related to the life of the people. This was the constant effort of Jesus himself. Fundamentally, human souls face the same needs today as in his time. But these needs are manifested differently today. They attack us in terms of the life which we live, just as styles are different now from those in the first century, though the same physical materials are being used to meet the same elemental need of the human race for clothing. The country pastor, then, must know the geography of his own county better than he knows that of Palestine. He must understand that, while human emotions, methods of thought, and reactions are but little different from what they were in the first century, science has enabled us to know so much more of God's laws that, as never before, we can relate the Gospel to life. All the sciences stand ready to aid us in this great and needful task.

All this means that the country church and its executive officer, the country preacher, must

enlarge their conception of their duty. Jesus said, "Go, preach." But He said more than that. He gave the subject for the preaching—the Kingdom of God—and He added in the two passages we have quoted some specific duties, other than the spoken word, but just as surely a part of preaching—all of which have definite bearing upon the Kingdom and its progress. We sometimes forget in thinking of that "one, far-off, divine event" toward which we are moving, that the Kingdom begins on earth, that Jesus prayed that it might come on earth, that He said it was within us, around us. The literal things that Jesus spoke of have been delegated to hospitals and various other institutions of social service, all inspired by the Church, but we must realize that there are social and economic ills in American rural life that are making moral lepers, spiritual prisoners, blind, and dead, who need the life-producing touch of the Christ as sorely as ever any one needed it in the days of an apostle.

It is part of the task, then, of the country church and the country pastor to be sympathetic to all the interests of the Kingdom. No community suffering from chronic economic pressure can be religiously sound. Where absence of proper recreation leads to improper amusements, the interests of the Kingdom are

crowded out. Where faulty living conditions enfeeble bodies, souls, too, will suffer. Nothing is foreign to the interests of the Kingdom. To cure similar ills Jesus sent forth His disciples. To cure similar ills John Frederic Oberlin erected schoolhouses, built a road and a bridge, cultivated potatoes, instructed his people in orchard culture, and became the spiritual leader of Protestants and Catholics alike, as well as the inspirer of countless thousands who, like him, toil in the country church, or who pass through the American university that bears his name. To cure these great, outstanding ills in our own rural communities is the ideal for the country church and the country pastor in America. The minister is unworthy of his name who does not sympathize with this ideal. But how shall that sympathy be shown?

The expert swimmer does not await the coming of the employed life guard when he sees a man in danger of drowning. So, too, the country church finds at times that its pastor must do things that he is not ordained to do. These things are done only from kingdom necessity. They are done because the minister must never forget that he is a citizen as well as a minister, and that in common with all other citizens he owes a Christian duty to "Cæsar," to the community in which he lives, earns his livelihood,

and enjoys the protection of law and order. But such outside activities should never be engaged in simply for the sake of doing something, but only after a careful social inventory or survey of the field. This taken, a man may find it his temporary duty to organize a band or a baseball team or a corn club or a community association which will look after all these and other things. But for a minister to do so is only an emergency measure and such affairs must be taken over by Christian leadership as soon as it can be inspired to assume the responsibility.

The aim of the country church movement is not to substitute anything for the Gospel. It is to assist in expressing the best religion of the ages in terms of the best spirit of the age. It believes that it is the duty of the rural pastor ever to exalt Jesus as the Saviour and as the impulse, the Inspirer of all true service, of all kingdom tasks and duties. Thus only can spiritual leadership be maintained. Thus only can power adequate to the kingdom task in rural America be generated and conserved. Apart from Jesus we can do nothing. The field of service for the country pastor and his church is to relate and apply the Gospel of life, so to define the Kingdom of Heaven and so to sympathize with and serve its manifold needs,

that rural ideals will be maintained and enlarged, that the men and women of farm and village will be saved and will go forth to express their religion in service for their church and their community, for their part of the Kingdom. It is a large field and a challenging task. None is more exacting, none more important. Success depends, not upon many activities, but few; not on various goals, but one—and that goal the Kingdom of Heaven.

IV

THE DEMAND FOR A NEW COUNTRY CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

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Four walls, six or eight windows, one door supporting a tower containing a bell, and inside some pews and an elevated box called a pulpit —this was the country church of our forefathers. Its function was to afford a place for preaching and the annual evangelistic effort. As country life became more permanent, basements and kitchens were added to provide for the children in the Bible school and for some social features in connection with the use of the church. These buildings expressed the need of the household farmer who ruled agriculture in America for the sixty years preceding 1890.

The last years have seen the growth of a new movement toward democracy. It has expressed itself in world, national, and community ideals. It has generated new thought and power in our institutions. The process has been accelerated, rather than retarded, by the War. It is the urge toward progress that is pulsing through every fiber of the social structure. Its reactions are changing the programs of church, school,

and every type of social institution. What some of these reactions are we have seen in the preceding chapters. The community and democratic movement is the idea that is central in the thought of our age.

Ideas have ever clothed themselves in material form, whether in dress, bridge-building, or religion. The ideas of religion have clothed themselves in buildings. In the temples of the ancients, in the grandeur of the Gothic, in the utilitarian lines of the modern institutional church, the places that have housed man's worship have expressed his ideas about religion. The temples of each age are an enduring photograph of that age's conception of what is fundamental in its ministry of religion.

The social thought that stands as the chief contribution of our democratic age to the sum total of religious life has enabled us to sift the experiences of past ages in the light of present needs and has made four things the chief features of religious life today: worship, preaching, teaching, and service are the fullest expression of the abundant life. It is with the last of these that we have been chiefly dealing. When all four are combined in one organization, as the times require that they should be, a new type of country church architecture is demanded.

In another book[1] the author has considered the practical details of this problem. It is sufficient here to voice the demands and consider something of what is involved.

The spiritual inheritance of many people makes them doubtful as to the value of combining all four of these essentials within one building. For this reason a community parish house is best, and where there is more than one religious organization within a community, it should be managed by some type of neighborhood association.

However, this ideal situation is not always possible and the experience of the War will in future add strength to the principle that whatever is fit to enter into the life of the people is fit to enter the people's church. The returned soldier who has found God on the battlefield, and heard His voice in a hut meeting shared by a canteen, a game room, and other activities that typify the love of God expressed in service, will demand a complete ministry before mere feeling or beauty. While in the large it is true that experiences and associations rather than decorations make a place sacred, the Church of tomorrow must also show its realization of the practical value of beauty to the esthetic sense of worshipers in buildings which, from the very

[1] "The New Country Church Building."

entrance, will suggest the spirit of religion and the freedom and abundance of the life of the child of God.

Preaching still has a function and will have a large one in the new age. There will be a demand for those who can voice the will of God for the times in which we live. But these two elements of worship and preaching have ever been given first consideration by the Church. The democratic and community movement demands new emphasis upon teaching, or religious education, and service.

Religious education in the church school is as important as any branches taught in the state school. Recent years have lifted it to the plane which it deserves. Lessons are graded to the age and capacity of the learner. As the social processes of the Old Testament are studied and God's dealings with nations are discovered, as Christian liberty and Christian salvation are seen to include all men and the whole of men, the church school is called upon to furnish rooms where each grade can face its own problems in its own way, with worship suited to its own needs. No longer is it right for a dozen classes to meet in a common room and unite in a common disturbance of the time dedicated to Bible study. The practical bearings of God's Word upon the life of the new day, upon char-

acter, social problems, peace and war, are too important to be sacrificed in the interests of a spiritually and socially inefficient economy of space.

So also as the country church recognizes and utilizes the gang instinct of the teen age for boys' and girls' clubs, which may plant corn, raise hogs, can vegetables, and enjoy Boy Scout or Camp Fire Girl work; as it turns to good purpose the moral value of proper recreation for all ages, but especially for the young people; as it glimpses the relation between good soils and good souls, and therefore with Christian helpfulness makes room for athletics, a men's club with agricultural emphasis, a domestic science exhibition, or any similar activity, there will be need of an enlarged church plant.

This is not the place to give plans and describe buildings, but three general suggestions may be given: No building should be erected for which there is not a well-defined community need. A survey should always precede a building operation and no appropriation should be made by a denominational church building society until the local congregation has planned to meet as fully as possible ascertained community needs. It is not necessary to have separate rooms for social and educational purposes. The boys' club can use its Sunday

classroom, the women's class can occupy the Red Cross or Aid Society rooms. It is surprising how much can be done in a small church. There are various devices for partitioning buildings at certain times, and, with movable chairs, a Sunday school room can be used for a dining hall, for amateur theatricals, and as a gymnasium.

V

THE VILLAGE SIDE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

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THE VILLAGE SIDE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

Every discussion of rural needs and opportunities must include the village. This is not merely because the government census reports bulk all communities under 2,500 as rural. It is chiefly for the reason that the average village is linked in its destiny and prosperity, as in its human and social elements, with the open country of which it is the center.

The majority of villages are evolutions. Some have risen to the rank of suburban communities and are completely urbanized in thought and practice. Others have been so strategically located, from the standpoint of growth, that they have become great cities. Perhaps the best example of this is Bethlehem, Pa., which was a sleepy little village until the very outbreak of the Civil War, and now is the prosperous and populous center of the steel industry in eastern America. Again, there is the village that has retrograded. Once it had great prospects, but now, either because of a failing agriculture or a collapsed boom, or the success of a neighboring town, or some other cause, it has become a

stagnant, helpless community with no purpose, no mission, no destiny. Some of the hill towns in New England fall into this classification. Then there is the real country village, the shipping point for a large rural area, the haven of retired farmers, and the despair of social reformers. It is this village which must be considered. It represents one of the most serious phases of the whole big question that is basic in our interest.

In many places this type of village has suffered socially as it has grown. It forms itself out of farm land, but in its very formation other interests are introduced beside the one which had been dominant—agriculture. Gradually professional, commercial, and artisan classes grow stronger. The source of supply shifts as necessities come increasingly from the city. With the increase in outside commerce new ideas are certain to enter, and the dominant agricultural interest may be largely lost sight of by the village. It may catch the disease of "bigitis," which afflicts cities so severely that numbers mean more than houses in which an increasing population may live, and may keep its eyes chiefly fixed on census reports as the criterion of community progress. When this happens, there is danger ahead, for all this does not alter the fact that the village is still a rural community. Its stores still sell

to the farmer, who receives and ships his freight from its railroad station. Its doctors and artisans still serve the farmer. Its few attractions tend to make it the recreational center of the open country, and in many sections the open-country church is succumbing to the religious attractions of the trade center. The soil contributes far more of the stability and all-round prosperity of the village than does the city, and to neglect this truth is to engender a lack of sympathy between town and country that is fatal to social progress and democracy in a community so constructed of two mutually dependent parts.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance for the new world order that village life be of a high order. The average little town just described is in a precarious condition. It has few industries and these are not large. Often they are of the non-essential type, like tobacco factories that have located away from the city to save higher rental and operating charges. There is small opportunity for the young people to find an outlet for their ambition. The school educates them for nothing in particular and too often does not even include domestic science and manual arts. The whole trend, therefore, is toward the city, especially if the interurban trolley furnishes cheap and convenient trans-

portation. The average village offers less to its young people in the way of permanent life-investment than does a progressive open-country community. But with the village becoming the center of rural life, drawing to it the people, young and old, from the country-side, the influence of the city may extend to these people as well. This is especially true when the village is consciously aping city ideals and methods and considers itself distinctly superior to rural communities.

The new democracy demands brotherhood and mutual understanding between town and country. The economic and social relationship between the two must be emphasized. If the high school is located in the town, let it have vocational guidance and provide for agricultural education. If the village church draws the farmer, it must not forget its ministry to him. The Gospel must be related to him and his life, as to those who earn their daily bread in other ways. The village church has the greatest opportunity, where it has a farm constituency, to preach and practice that essential brotherhood which will effect the cooperation of the community to secure equal advantage for all.

But the task is one that is larger than the church alone. It is a matter for organization and leadership—organization according to

democratic principles, leadership of a highly consecrated type, but both on a community basis.[1]

[1]The reader who desires to study the solution of this problem is urged to procure Professor C. J. Galpin's new book, "Rural Life."

VI

RURAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

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The watchword of the democratic movement which the War has revealed as permeating to every corner of our land from Alaska to the Gulf is the word "community." The slogan of all successful social building has been the same word. Even in the largest city of our continent social problems are being expressed in community terms, and New York realizes that the Chelsea neighborhood, the lower East Side, and Greenwich Village must each be treated separately, and each as a community.

Those who are at work in rural fields have long realized that it is necessary to get neighbors to realize their community of interests if substantial progress is to be made in removing the obstacles that bar the way of advance.

In the field of rural social endeavor a community includes those who have the largest number of common interests centering in one place. Its territory may be determined by a team haul[1] or by an auto haul distance in some sections, or it may be narrowed by the poor

[1]Warren H. Wilson, "The Evolution of a Country Community."

roads or the successful competition of a nearby town. In the last analysis the boundaries of a community are fixed more often by economic forces than by geographic, though the educational and religious interests of the community are usually coterminous with the economic. Practically every rural community must include the village which is its mail and shipping point.

The community being taken as the social unit, organization and leadership are discovered to be essential for effective service. The Government recognized this, and the National Council of Defense sought to expand war organization until there should be, not merely state and county councils of defense, but community councils as well, which should coordinate all the war activities of each community. President Wilson described this as "an advance of vital significance," resulting "when thoroughly carried out in welding the nation together as no nation of great size has ever been welded before." If carried through, such a nation-wide net of community organizations would furnish ready to hand the machinery necessary for the task of reconstruction after the War.

Even before the War the Bureau of Education had discovered the need, and adopted the slogan, "Every schoolhouse a community capitol and every community a little democracy."

This plan provides for a community secretary or executive and a board of directors, each one of whom shall be the chairman of a department of the work, dealing with such subjects as forum, civics, recreation, home and school, and buying clubs. The government bulletin which describes this plan has been reprinted and gives several instances of how it works.[2]

The Department of Agriculture has also been struggling with the problem, approaching it naturally from the viewpoint of its economic and social aspects. The Department's expert, Professor Thomas Nixon Carver, worked out a plan of rural community organization calling for a central committee and ten subcommittees on Farm Production, Marketing, Securing Farm Supplies, Farm Finance and Accounting, Communication and Transportation, Education, Sanitation, Recreation, Beautification, and Household Economics. This plan is given in full, with most illuminating comments, in the 1914 Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture.

In 1913 the Government sent abroad a distinguished commission to study European rural credits and community organization. Speaking out of the richness of this experience and with the background of many years of experience in

[2]Henry E. Jackson, "A Community Center."

rural service, its vice-chairman, President Butterfield, of Massachusetts Agricultural College, said at the 1914 Y M C A Silver Bay Conference:

"The ideal rural community must be self-sufficient, so that a complete life can be lived there. In so far as any restricted part of civilization can have the resources of all civilization it will have them. It will be an essential social cell made up of all elements. The welfare of this organization is of primary importance. The community is the beginning and the end of rural social development. If we cannot build up little civilizations, we cannot have a big one. A community is a neighborhood, it is a getting together of a family of families. To build a rural community there must be a study of it. Then there must be a long-term policy, but there must also be immediate steps. From the standpoint of machinery a community council is important. There should be community conferences, democratic in tone. Each community must have a community engineer, probably a minister. We must incarnate ideals in a person and a building. There must be a community center. Once accept the idea of community building and we redirect all our social agencies. It also affects personal leadership. The peculiar institution of the man becomes the means to the end of community building—be it church, business, lodge, or school. This does not minimize, but rather puts new dignity on these institutions and their leadership, for with every

individual improvement there is also social improvement."

This judgment gives adequate place to what the other plans largely leave out—the church. It is the natural gathering-place of the farmer. It is one of that trinity of rural social forces—home, school, and church. It is destined to occupy a place of ever-increasing influence and power as it responds to the challenges of the new age. It is the fountain-head of rural idealism, the custodian of moral standards, the discoverer and vitalizer of rural leadership. Without it no democracy can remain safe, for the essence of democracy is religious. It must be considered in every scheme of moral community organization. The educational, the agricultural, and the religious forces of a community must be fused for a united approach to their mutual problems, and they must include all other social groups within each community as well. In such efforts the church, untrammelled by political allegiance, and concerned wholly with the best interests of the community, may well lead.

On the ground that this must be the final form of rural community organization the remainder of this chapter and the next will be devoted to the description of actual experiments. The first two of these were under way,

independently of each other, before the government pronouncements already mentioned and also before the address quoted had been delivered.

Locust Valley, N. Y., lies on Long Island, beyond the boundaries of the greater city, in that belt that is shared by the great estates, the truck farmers, and the artisans who serve them. It is a village of but a few more than 200 families. It has formed a Neighborhood Association that leads the nation in its accomplishments. It all started ten years ago with a dozen men who wanted to see a bad road made better—and did see it, because they worked as well as wished.

Progress was not rapid at first. The church was languishing and finally it was decided to secure a resident minister for the church, who could also be an executive secretary for the Association. The right man was found in Rev. E. Fred. Eastman. He took charge five years ago, revitalized the church, and used it for ministry, not only to the souls of the needy, but also to the community needy in its moral and spiritual aspects. The church put the religious motive into community service and it and the Neighborhood Association prospered together. The organization was not all-inclusive. It lists committees on Station and Grounds,

Health, Causeway, Pond, Mosquito, Roads and Lights, and others. But the record of achievement will show that the organization was effective, and became increasingly so after church and community discovered their proper relationship. The results of a decade of work include:

Two roads macadamized, largely at the expense of the Association, one being widened.

A self-supporting library of over 3,000 volumes, and a monthly circulation of more than 400.

Kindergarten, sewing, cooking, music, and manual training classes introduced into the public school.

Railroad station grounds beautified and cared for.

Anti-mosquito campaign each year, swamps and stagnant pools drained or flooded.

A bathing beach and cottage leased for the people of this community.

School gardens—and that before the war enthusiasm.

The town persuaded to vote $10,000 for a bathing pavilion.

The State Conservation Commission persuaded to stock Mill Neck Creek with 2,000,000 tomcod.

A Recreation Department founded, which

furnishes recreation to the community. This department began with a few young men who used a barn loaned for the purpose. As the value of such effort was seen, the town set to work and today owns a beautiful $40,000 neighborhood house.

A sociological survey completed as a basis for future work.

The Association is proud of this record, and deserves to be. But it is prouder yet of the spirit of cooperation that seems to be growing in the village day by day. Everyone thus far seems to be willing to do his share in making the village clean, prosperous, and democratic.[3]

Tucked away in the lower end of Lehigh County, Pa., under the shadow of the Lehigh Mountains to the north and separated from the rest of the world by high hills, lies the little village of Coopersburg, a community of 700 souls in the center of a farming population of more than twice that number. Lying in the midst of a fertile farming region, reached by both the railroad and the interurban trolley, with possibilities on every side, it had no distinction to boast of except the deadness of the community. Nearby farmers went to other towns to sell their produce. The retired farmer

[3]For the complete story of this work, see "Fear God in Your Own Village."

lived and ruled in Coopersburg, and there seemed no future.

In January, 1914, a group of Coopersburg citizens, originally brought together by one of the churches, issued a call for a community meeting to discuss plans for solving the problems presented by the situation in this community of 700 souls. The meeting was enthusiastic and what is known as a Neighborhood Association was formed with the following committees: Industrial, Recreation, Civic Improvement, Health and Hygiene, Home and School, and Publicity. It was designed to have a central organization working through committees, flexible enough to meet any community need as it arose. Everything was to be coordinated in a strong community association issuing only one financial appeal for all needs, on the basis of committee budgets. Churches, lodges, business men, and school interests were represented on the various committees and thus all were bound together by a common purpose. The formation of the Association was the first socializing experience that the community had ever had. Its organization succeeded in fusing all community interests in a way that almost exactly coincided with the prescription of President Butterfield. It has been flexible enough to meet all needs, including those raised by the War.

The first task of the new association was to find out about itself, and to this end a social inventory or survey was taken. The results showed that the industrial pessimism was without ground, that of 750 members of the community, 550 were depositors at the local national bank. It proved that the two largest industries, which employed a total of 150 hands, were handicapped by a lack of houses in the town, which forced their employes either to go back and forth from the farms or nearby towns, or else to board in the rather poor hotels in the community. It disclosed, also, that just on this account there was a considerable waste in the wages of the employes. The lack of sympathy between the town and the farmer was discovered, and the worth-whileness of several small local industries, employing only a few hands, was proved.

The recreational situation was found to be typical of many small communities. The people had a love of fun, but there was no effort to meet the human desire for recreation. Many people went to other communities, notably the nearby cities of Allentown and Bethlehem, to patronize commercialized amusements. Others in summer contented themselves with pitching quoits, and there were the usual loafers around the hotels and in the pool rooms. Apart from

a poorly supported baseball team, a Boy Scouts patrol, the lodges, and a few church organizations, there was no provision for recreation. The public school was a large modern building standing in an open, level field, not far from a good-sized pond. The possibilities for a neighborhood park were thus excellent, but the school situation itself needed attention. It was found that, because the high school course was only two years long, some people with children were kept from moving into the town, and that there was a general lack of sympathy between the school and its directors and the people of the community. There was no library of any account and no night school work, in spite of a definite need for both. The usual rural health conditions were disclosed as far as sanitation, ventilation, and strictness in quarantine were concerned. The death rate for the preceding decade was found to be 14.8. The only discoverable civic assets were beautifully shaded streets and sidewalks well above the average for a small town. Of community pride and spirit there was none.

It is interesting to note that these conditions reacted on the religious complexion of the town. All the churches drew home mission aid. In fact, the combined salary of the three pastors, so far as the town paid it, was less than the

average salary of men teachers in the public school. One church, constituting but nine per cent of the total church membership, was found to be raising sixty per cent of the money given in the town for religious purposes.

This was the situation that confronted the Neighborhood Association when it began work February 4, 1914. The men at its head were far-seeing and earnest, infused with a deep religious spirit. They believed that prosperous churches and poor recreation were incompatible, that poor health and poor schools prevented industrial progress. On the platform that poor economic conditions are irreligious and that irreligion makes for economic weakness, they went ahead to work out the program that was derived from the results of the survey.

First of all, a Building and Loan Association was started, which is just concluding its fifth successful year of business. This answered the double purpose of helping building and inducing saving on the part of many who had been wasting their wages. Over a score of fine, new houses were erected the first year. Signs advertising the town and giving directions to autoists were placed at the entrance of the borough. A community envelope was issued. A public-spirited citizen placed at the disposal of the Association a large tract of land to offer

as free factory sites, so that in this way the character of the future population is controllable. The Industrial Committee avoided the temptation to bring in the first industries that applied—some of them unstable indeed. On the other hand, it did get behind and strengthen several local industries of the proper caliber, thus giving employment to more hands. It aided in the movement which gave the county a farm agent and concerned itself with other agricultural problems.

The recreational work was a hard problem. Progress, however, has been made. A seven-acre community picnic ground has been placed at the Association's disposal. The ground around the high school has been leased, including the baseball field, and the first steps toward a community park in the heart of the town have been taken. There have been numerous entertainments by local talent, and a number of first-class outside attractions have been brought into the town. An orchestra has been organized and the band and baseball team aided. A Women's Auxiliary is responsible for some type of recreation each quarter, any profits from which go into the fund for a Neighborhood House. Tennis courts have been built, a volley-ball field laid out, and a small playground made, all on the school grounds. In

the near future a swimming pond will be opened.

The Home and School Committee has performed all the work of a Parent-Teachers' Association. A number of meetings have been held with a view to bringing the home and school closer together and increasing the sentiment in favor of higher education and of adding another year to the high school course. Annual May Day exercises have been held, and electric lights have been installed in the school building. The school has become quite a social center. On a recent evening three meetings were in progress, all looking toward advancing the town.

The Health Committee is holding annual Clean-Up Days, bringing in lecturers on health topics, publishing weekly articles on health subjects in the local newspaper, and distributing literature from house to house on starving the fly, tuberculosis prevention, and the like.

The greatest task of the Civic Improvement Committee was taking the social inventory. But it has accomplished other work as well. The town's history has been written at its instance, town colors have been adopted, a town song has been composed, and when the old station was damaged by fire, the committee by prompt action because it was not necessary to call a meeting, had within twenty-four hours

asked for a new station, the contract for which has been awarded. An Old Home Week, built around a cluster of church anniversaries, has been held.

The great goal of the community is to erect close to the public school a Neighborhood House. Pledges for this have been taken. The plans are drawn, and the funds already collected are in Liberty Bonds. Here the community will be able to congregate in winter. It will contain committee rooms, rest rooms for farmers' wives, a reading room, a game room, a stage for entertainments, a gymnasium which can also be used for an auditorium, a manual training room, a domestic science room, and locker rooms and shower baths. There will also be places for the band, the orchestra, and the fire apparatus. With the coming of this house will come many other things now on the program; and then, the old program having been accomplished, will follow the need for a new inventory and the lining up of new tasks.

The Neighborhood Association did not believe that all community interests could be kept on a plane of equality nor that the endeavor could succeed at all unless it was dominated by religious power and faith. The constant effort is to keep strong and clear the religious impulse and motive that is back of

the whole work. There can be no completely saved community life that does not include every feature of the community's work and play. It is as important to Coopersburg that it have the right sort of industries, houses, health, recreation, and schools, as that it have the right sort of churches. It does not believe it can have any one without having all the others. To this end community religious mass meetings were held, at which some of the most noted rural leaders in America spoke. Life decisions were made at some of these meetings.[4]

The significant thing about this scheme of community organization, which has now been tried successfully elsewhere, together with the others given, is that all can be applied to village or open country or to both combined, that all recognize the necessity of taking the community as the basic social unit and that all give the church its proper place.

[4]For a full story of this work, see "Cooperation in Coopersburg."

VII

ACHIEVING COMMUNITY DEMOCRACY

CHAPTER VII

ACHIEVING COMMUNITY DEMOCRACY

Right on the top of the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, nine miles from the nearest railroad station, and connected with the outside world only by a daily stage which brings the morning papers late in the afternoon, is the rural community of Newfoundland, which has caught the vision of neighborhood democracy and efficiency, and which in a fine way is realizing that vision day after day.

Newfoundland is in that section of the Poconos where three counties meet. The community lies in a little valley through which flows a picturesque creek, the Wallenpaupack. The mountains tower on all sides. The road to anywhere is over the hills—no matter in what direction. Not content with isolating the little community, the mountains have invaded even its few level fields, and ever and again the surface is pierced by rocks and boulders. The rest of the farms seem to hang precariously to the mountainsides. The land is not of the best. Ten dollars would buy many an acre; fifty would take the best that the valley can offer.

Originally the land was settled by hardy and

industrious Germans from Baden. The descendants of these people are still the predominant element in the population. Religiously, they have been ministered to for more than fourscore years by the Moravian Church. As years rolled on, another racial group pushed into the valley from the north. They were English and warm-hearted Methodists. The "first families" viewed this development with small favor. Racial psychology is a new science, and these people could not understand each other. Seeds of denominational rivalry were sown and cultivated, and the expected hundredfold crop of interchurch jealousy, prejudice, bigotry, and unbrotherliness was reaped.

"Why, sir," said one leader of the community, a country doctor of the finest type, "it wasn't a dozen years ago that no Moravian would enter our Methodist church unless there was a special service. Then they'd sit in the back and look sour enough to turn fresh milk, and we Methodists—well, it took a big funeral to get us inside the other church. And now—" But that's our story.

Isolated by the mountains, handicapped by the poor soil, torn by denominational rivalry—no observer would pick this locality for a rural demonstration field. However, such it has be-

come. Late in 1915 the community, acting as a social unit, bought out its country hotel and converted the building into a community house, and the barn into a community hall and gymnasium.

It didn't begin with a survey! These people knew nothing then of the theories of rural social science, with its pronouncements and programs. It began because of elemental human needs which drove the people together. The first impulse came from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the patient but persevering campaign which it waged for years, a by-product of which was the cooperation of the women of both churches.

But there have been other sources of inspiration and leadership. For some years Newfoundland has been blessed with strong pastors, whose spiritual leadership concerned itself with the hallowing of all life, and who were too big to emphasize the differences between the two churches. Rather, they minimized them. Then, also, there has been of more recent years a strong school, favored with exceptionally good teachers. In some instances the resident pastor has also been the principal or at least one of the small faculty. This has tied together the home, school, and church in a most advantageous way and has helped to remove preju-

dices. Furthermore, the young people have not cared to perpetuate the theological differences of the past. The present, with its needs and opportunities, came home to them with sufficiently urgent appeal to rule out the unworthiness of the past. Finally, for the last quarter of a century there has been a steady increase in the number of city people who have spent their summers in this region, and who have mingled with the residents, both in their play and worship, with complete disregard of denominational affiliations.

These various influences worked subtly but surely; they were almost unrecognized by many, but not by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Feeling that the time had come for a great forward step, and securing the cooperation of both churches, the women succeeded in bringing into the community Professor and Mrs. Varney, who carried out a welfare week that was a tremendous success because of the way in which community social service was linked up with fundamental spiritual needs and motives. Inspired largely by this week, and carefully nurtured by the leaders of the community, there was formed and gradually came to fruition the conception of a community house, in which should focus all the activities of the region, and which should prove a center

furnishing recreation through the long winter, binding the people together, and holding some of the young folks to their home. To make this vision an actuality, a Community Welfare Association was proposed.

Those were great days in the Wallenpaupack valley. The big world knew nothing of them, but the people were coming nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven. Nations may wage war, but, after all, it is only as the Kingdom comes to communities large and small, in city and country, in America and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, that we can have a world that is safe, democratic, Christian, in which

> "the laws of Christ become
> The laws and habits of the state."

In the furtherance of that ideal, the people of Newfoundland spent many an hour in earnest thought. In the two stores, around the blacksmith's anvil, at the post-office while waiting for the stage, and in and after church, the plan was discussed. There were some who opposed the move because it was new. Progress has ever had to overcome the natural conservative. Others felt that the new plan would hurt the churches by deflecting both contributions and service. They could not know in advance, what time has abundantly proved here and

elsewhere, that the very reverse is true, and that both the cause of community betterment and the welfare of the churches as organizations are materially furthered by such a step. Newfoundland had to take this on faith; it did, and in so doing it won the victory. The Community Welfare Association was finally formed. The board of directors was chosen from the hamlets and rural districts within a radius of several miles. Any person over fourteen years of age, with an interest in the community and a dollar, was allowed to join, regardless of creed, party, or residence.

One of the first steps was to have the Association incorporated, and soon afterward the hotel was purchased for $3,800 and fitted up as described at an additional cost of about $1,200. Over half the money was raised in a short time, and it was a big sum for these people. Contributions were not large, measured by the standards of city organizations, but measured by the resources of the people, they were most generous and proved how deeply interested and thoroughly in earnest the community was.

A few months of work, much of it volunteer labor, sufficed to bring about the changes necessary to give the community its long-hoped-for plant. The community house contains rooms for various church and neighborhood organiza-

tions, for reading and playing games, and for the domestic science department of the vocational school. The old barn contains a large dining-hall and kitchen on the top floor, while the main floor is given over to a gymnasium-auditorium with a raised stage at one end, together with accessories necessary for its double purpose.

The dedication exercises of the new enterprise, held in November, 1915, united the people in their effort. Despite very bad weather, everybody for miles around came. The speakers included prominent judicial and school men, who helped to show the people the importance of the thing they were doing. As the last meeting drew to a close, the scoutmaster asked every boy and girl in the community to stand up. Pointing to them, he said to the adults, "These, your boys and girls, thank you from their hearts for your splendid generosity." The audience could only rise and sing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," and receive a well-deserved benediction.

That was just three years ago, and it was only the beginning of steady progress in a united neighborhood, in which churches and schools have alike shared. Progress once started is hard to stop. It is contagious. Less than a year after the opening of the building owned by

the community, the two townships in which most of the neighborhood lies combined, and the Newfoundland Consolidated School was formed, with a fine vocational department. The agricultural division has an entire floor of the building. Its equipment is good, its course excellent. Right across from the school is the Moravian church—the largest in the region and the only one in the little village—and its farm of forty acres may some day be added to the school's equipment. The domestic science department meets in the community house. What was once the barroom, with all its home-breaking influences, has become the kitchen for the cooking class and a potent factor in happy home-making. Other rooms have been turned over for sewing, home decoration, and other divisions of the work. The school has a patrons' day, an annual school fair, and other features which have completely disarmed opposition to the move. Few schools have made so much progress in so short a time. The spirit is that of an established institution.

The church situation has materially improved. There is a large amount of interchurch attendance and considerable cooperation between the two Bible schools. Jealousy, if it exists, dares not lift its head. "We're working together because we've found it pays in every way," said

one prominent church officer. God hasten others to the same discovery. No outsider could tell a Methodist from a Moravian. They are as alike in aim and spirit as the initial letter of their denomination. They have found something bigger than denominational loyalty—they have found that the Kingdom of God is a larger ideal, encompassing all others. Leaders in the day school are active in the church. Some are to be found in the Bible school as teachers. They also give their time freely to community enterprises. Adult Bible classes have boomed since the village became a neighborhood in deed as well as in word. There is a cleaner, better, more progressive community life, such as always comes when religion takes on new meanings, and when opportunities for service are multiplied. Offerings for benevolence have increased. Each Monday evening a union men's Bible class meets under the leadership of the resident pastor, the Rev. G. M. Shultz, of the Moravian Church. Even on the stormiest evenings last winter the attendance did not fall below twenty. The people living along the tortuous roads that branch off from the state highway, heretofore worshiping by the handful in two chapels at the extremes of the community's bounds, have seen in the interest of the church in every phase of life a convincing

demonstration of religion. A recent revival has won many souls for the Master and has tied the awakened lives to constructive service for the Kingdom of God. In short, here we have an ideal example of the church inspiring Christians to reconstruct a community and sharing in the blessings of the work it has inspired, fostered, and supported.

At a recent synod of the Moravian Church a delegate from this community was a member of a committee which discussed the raising of the minimum salary of rural pastors. The figure mentioned was $200 higher than the salary the church at Newfoundland at present pays—and it was a good salary before the great rise in living costs.

"Well," he said slowly, "it'll be a little hard on us. We're planning to build a new parsonage, but I reckon we can do it. I reckon we've *got* to do it, to have the sort of men we want in that parsonage." No, community work has not hurt the church! It has given it new vision, new life, new power!

But the work is not limited to school and church. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union meets in the parlor of the hotel building which its vision transformed. The Boy Scout troop and the Camp Fire Girls have their center there, as does the latest organization,

the Red Cross, in which centers a vast amount of effective war service. In the community hall are held various suppers, musicales, entertainments, and theatricals, and there, too, the boys', younger and older girls', and men's basket-ball teams play their games under the coaching of one of the faculty who has had a college athletic career. An athletic field will some day be added to the community equipment, and the team play thus learned will bear fruit in even greater community cooperation in the future, just as clean athletics will make for moral fiber. In fact, it has borne fruit already, for many of the community's best, both young men and women, have gone out to make contributions to the world similar to what they have already given in their home village—the contribution, perhaps of a life laid down instead of a life lived, but in the same cause.

And the end is not yet! As is always the case, the work seems, to those who are doing it, to progress more slowly than it really does. Difficulties loom larger than they are. Hence, last spring a denominational secretary was called in and taken to every corner of the field. He spoke to various congregations, Bible schools, and day school classes. He held many interviews. On the last night there was a neighborhood meeting in the community hall.

Both the Methodist and Moravian ministers spoke. The school faculty, the school board attended—in fact, everybody was there for more than an hour of conference. *Now* the Newfoundland community is planning to take a social survey and get to work on a long-time program of community building. After the conference broke up, there were such refreshments as are served only by the queens of country kitchens, and then the secretary lost himself with others in watching a spirited basket-ball game, refereed by one of the ministers and participated in by two of the school faculty and other men, young and not quite so young. The impression deepened in the mind of the one who had counseled with the people that evening that he had received far more than he could ever give; and he remembers it as another of those experiences, the sum total of which will some day bring the abundant life to rural America.

VIII

THE LAW OF SUCCESS

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAW OF SUCCESS

"I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:19, 20).

This passage needs to have its meaning discovered again to us of the new age. It has been abused too much. It has been offered to the Lord as an excuse for small numbers gathered in country churches which sometimes could not justify their existence on the ground of advancing the Kingdom. The words that Jesus spoke are a blow at selfishness, they are a plea for cooperation. They teach that where as few as two or three are agreed as touching any one definite thing that coincides with the principle of Jesus, it shall be done. Definiteness in cooperation wins. And that is just what the Church too often lacks.

There is a lot of good water power still going to waste, enough to develop electric power sufficient to save millions of tons of coal. So

there is a lot of good human energy going to waste in keeping alive church organizations that lack a program and fail in the essentials of service. Replying to a denominational questionnaire, one minister frankly answered the question, "What good thing did you accomplish last year?" by writing, "We haven't harmed anybody." Perhaps he meant to be humorous, but he sketched the situation of many another church. It has kept the wheels going, had its annual revival, its special Christmas and Easter services, its Bible school picnic, and little else. There has been no vital contribution to the community as such, no significant advance in the spiritual life, no vibrant sense of the Spirit of the living, leading Christ throbbing through every part of the body of the church organization. Why not? There have been no two or three agreed as touching the next steps in advance and so determined that they have come to God in prayer about it.

In a little room at Silver Bay, Fred B. Smith and Roy Guild knelt in prayer one afternoon and the Men and Religion Forward Movement was born. John R. Mott has said that one hundred real intercessors could win the world. Five men caught in a thunderstorm sought shelter under a haystack. They prayed and out of their prayers was born the modern mis-

sionary movement. Back of every record of achievement in community organization and progress recorded in the last chapters was a small group of two or three or seven or eight who were agreed as touching the thing that has now come to pass and who linked with prayer, service in the cause.

For service, too, is essential and those who first glimpse what is to be must be missionary in character, that others, too, may see and understand and that leadership may be developed. The local leader must have a world vision and yet be very consciously a part of the local community, knowing it and recognizing its relationships. He must immerse himself in its history and traditions, recognize the significance of the present, everyday experiences, and be able to weave them into the community consciousness. This is not an easy pathway. It means, not revolution, but a guiding of community evolution, for there can be no progress unless it is by the people. No leader must attempt to force things beyond the limitations of the time and the consciousness of the bulk of the people. The purpose of leadership is to get things accomplished in the realm of personal character and community action. The work must be done through others and leadership must be by indirection, by belief in

the others—which was the way Jesus inspired men to follow the example of His life.

This program of leadership and service, following definiteness in cooperative prayer, need not appall. "How many loaves have ye? go and see" (Mark 6:38). This is the question of the Master, as it was on the day when His compassion for the multitude moved Him to break bread for the five thousand. He wanted the disciples to know their resources. Feeble they were, but He used them effectively. Prayer, and when the call comes, service—that call is not for great resources, measured by the world's standards. It is a call to place *all* resources at the Master's disposal. The results are in His keeping and they will be remarkable if there is whole-souled consecration. Definiteness in cooperation, total consecration—these develop the faith that is victorious. This is the law of success in community endeavor.

IX

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE WAR

CHAPTER IX

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE WAR

Some time ago a rural community leader turned to his pastor and said, "Why is there so much war on the front page every day?" The man had seen no German foe, he had not experienced in his own life the horrors of war. He was a prosperous farmer in a progressive rural community. The meaning of the struggle had not gotten down to him and neither he nor many like him understood why the country church was asked to get into the War.

Few of us will forget the summer and fall of 1914, when wheat went down to seventy cents and cotton sold at six cents. The reason for this was that in the first shock of the War we gave up the right to use the seas as a highway. In a few months our reaction came and with it an assertion of our rights and a resumption of our commerce. Prices rebounded, but the rebound came because there were ships in the world and the markets for our products were near. In Australia the farmers faced bankruptcy. For three years they were not able to sell their crops except to the cities of their

own continent. Millions of bushels of food have rotted. There were not ships enough to take the wheat so badly needed by the starving people of Europe.

This was not a purely commercial matter. We did not fight for profits. That which concerns profits concerns also many other things, and most of all, freedom. The moral issues at stake in the War are to be seen in Belgium, in Serbia, in Armenia, and in Russia. What Germany did to these countries she would do anywhere when she felt that necessity demanded it. Neither the honor of individuals, nor the integrity of nations, nor the sanctity of religions is safe in her hands.

Had we not entered this war, prosperity would have been the least of our losses. Germany victorious, we should have had to accept might as the one law in the world. No treaty would have been sacred, there would have been a lower standard of living. Had this happened, the country church would have been impaired. With these losses would have come the anguish of unsatisfied living and the nerve strain of living close to the deadline of poverty.

And so the war we fought was not only a defense of our territory and of our right to freedom of the seas, but also the defense of our homes, our ideals, our liberty, and all that

we in America have grown to be in the years of our history and have held dearer than life itself.

This is why we fought with a conscience that was clear. Our aims, declared by a Christian President, were nearer to the ideals of the Kingdom of God than those of any nation that has ever waged war before. As the men of 1776 went forward with the benediction of the Church to fight for democracy, and as the men of the Civil War were decided that on this continent there should be no distinction as between bond or free, so the men of the present day went out to prove that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." This is why the country church got into the War.

Yet too often churches distant from the training camps felt that they had little to do in the struggle in which we were engaged. Nothing could be more erroneous. The 50,000 pastors of America's 150,000 churches are an army of leaders influencing half our population. Their pulpits are positions of unique power. They can mold the opinion of the more conservative and at the same time the more stable element of our nation. The struggle offered them an unexampled opportunity to interpret the will of God in the war-torn world. Our people needed

the eye to see, the mind to understand, the heart to endure. They craved the words of explanation, of consolation, of hope. The War gave the rural preacher an enlarged call to service in this way and in the leadership of his people in the actual organized war work of the community.

The first step in some churches was the creation of a war-time committee, consisting of the best representatives from the various organizations. This committee met regularly, organized and correlated the war-time work of the church, and brought into action every bit of power of which the church was capable. This committee may well be continued now for community work. In small communities these local church committees should be affiliated, cooperating with one another and also with the school, grange, lodges, and similar organizations. Reports follow of what has been accomplished by certain communities.

A New Jersey church has a thirty-five-acre farm on which thirty-eight men and boys had each from one fourth of an acre to an acre to cultivate. Money was advanced to pay for ploughing, harrowing, and for seed, a proportionate amount being charged to each plot. The vegetables in excess of home needs were sold either fresh or canned, the proceeds going to the Red Cross,

Prizes aggregating $125 were offered for the best gardens in the village yards.

One minister in eastern Arkansas went out into cotton districts where, as a rule, there is little civic interest, and through persistent work he organized an active commercial club in each of the towns and brought the farmers and the town people into closer relationship. Now he is reaching out with his influence throughout the country districts in the towns' trading territory.

It is the well nigh universal testimony of state agricultural clubs, directors and state leaders of the big war drives that ministers have as a class rendered invaluable service.

The Canaan congregation in North Dakota is composed of one hundred and thirty German-speaking Americans. The pastor, Rev. W. W. Goerner, has relatives in the army of the enemy. Most of the services of this church are conducted in the German language. The Red Cross drive came right at the planting time. These people were being urged to sow an increased acreage and give that full attention. Help was scarce. But within two months they raised over $800 for the Red Cross, $463.25 by cash donations, many giving at the rate of $5 an acre. Then they donated articles and held a sale, realizing $314.60. The children

were organized into a Junior Red Cross branch and apart from other activities realized $35.75. Furthermore, practically all the women kept busy sewing and knitting for the Red Cross.

At Raymore, Mo., the Presbyterian pastor, Rev. O. H. Campbell, took an active part, through the church, in war work. The drives were organized upon a community basis and launched with well-arranged and well-advertised public meetings. To save fuel, and because there was only one pastor in the village, union services were held in turn at the three churches and a union prayer meeting was started and has been maintained. The pastor writes: "Men have been made to feel that it is quite as religious to increase production and conserve food as to say prayers and sing hymns, that a slacker is a disgrace to the church as well as to the country, that fundamentally this war has been a war for the triumph of a great religious principle."

Interest in war activities as shown by the First Methodist Church of Van Wert, O., has been manifold. A quarter of its 1,500 members live in the country. The county, with 30,000 population, is decidedly rural. The town of Van Wert, with a population of 8,000, the county seat, is the only center of any size.

Previous to America's participation in the War there was little sentiment in favor of such a step, and a decided lack of enthusiasm after war was declared. It was felt by those who saw the issues at stake, which all have since come to see, that the county was asleep and something must be done to awaken the people to their responsibility. There is much wealth in this county, with every year adding more, and the population, living in a little world all their own, had never been greatly disturbed in their ease and self-satisfaction. It was seen that a double service would be performed if the people could be awakened; first, on behalf of the great cause, and second, to the people themselves in causing them to take an interest in and serve someone beyond their own borders.

In the First Methodist Church there had been a very active brotherhood with a membership of several hundred men. Instead of arranging a series of banquets, with speakers to entertain the members, as had been the custom, the pastor suggested that the community establish a Community War Forum, to be held in the church, following the regular Sunday evening meetings, with an interim long enough to permit people from the other churches to attend if they desired. This was done, and every week throughout the year, until Sunday

evening meetings were discontinued for the summer, the Forum held forth with ever increasing interest and benefit. Local speakers, both men and women, from all walks of life, and without respect to church affiliation, discussed the War from every conceivable angle in its material, moral, and spiritual bearings. Occasionally returned soldiers and other out-of-town speakers were secured. Patriotic music was sometimes provided and a large map of the war area with movable battlefronts was made and hung at the front of the church. The leaders of the various drives for funds sought the privilege of holding open meetings at the forum hour and special patriotic demonstrations were often set for that time because of its popularity.

Previous to this, under the leadership of First Church, a county-wide Methodist Brotherhood had been formed, with a membership of nearly one thousand and representing nearly forty churches. Early in the fall of 1917 it was planned to call these men in for a great meeting at the county seat. Every part of the county was well represented. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis was secured to deliver his famous address on "German Atrocities." The large auditorium of the church was crowded and the men went back to their neighborhoods with a new vision of the meaning of the War and

satisfied, as they had not been, with America's entrance into the struggle.

The pastor of the church, feeling early that the interests of the Kingdom and the interests involved in the great struggle in Europe were largely identical, preached persistently on war subjects. Gradually the sentiment in the county underwent a great change until the people were ready to respond to every cause presented and easily put it "over the top." One thing that they did was to make a collection of photographs of the boys representing this church, together with the names of their various military organizations. These pictures, numbering 125, were grouped in large frames and hung, with a huge service flag, prominently in the church. Pictures of the flag were presented at a mass meeting, when the parents of the boys were especially invited and the mothers or other friends, as their boys' names were called, came forward and pinned their stars on the flag.

A concert in which the anthems and songs of all the allied nations were sung by a chorus of forty voices attracted such attention that it was repeated. Printed booklets with the texts of the selections sung were distributed.

The numerous appeals, letters, etc., issued by the Government's representatives, the Federal Council of Churches, and other organizations

engaged in war work, were read from the pulpit in order that the people might have their duty constantly held before them. Generous offerings were received for war sufferers and to bring added comforts to the soldier boys. Every department of war work was given proper attention and no request of those responsible for raising funds for the Red Cross, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Salvation Army, or the church war work, was ignored. The response, with benefit unmeasured to those who contributed, was gratifyingly generous. Recognition of the part this church played in war activities is found in the fact that when a permanent County War Council was formed the pastor was chosen as its president.

One of the most significant accounts comes from Rev. Elmer Bouher, of Kingston, Ark. His is more than a representative rural congregation. It is a mission located thirty-five miles "as the crow flies" from the nearest railroad and fifty-five miles by mail route. The buildings are upon the mountain-side overlooking the narrow valley of Kings River. This valley is about a half a mile wide, but the remainder of the mission is a typical mountainous section.

At the close of the Civil War there was not a building left standing in this whole mission. Very few people have come into this section

from other states. The people here are "purely American." Many of them live and farm just as they did fifty years ago. The roads are very bad. There is one automobile and one bathtub in the mission.

They have two stores, a bank, a spoke plant, a flour mill, three blacksmith shops, and two churches in the parish. The state stands third from the top of the list of states in education. But this county is located in a group of nine counties that stand at the lowest point in the education of white children in the whole United States, and is third from the bottom of these nine counties. One third of the negro schools of the country stand above these nine counties. There is not a high school in the county and not a school in the mission is graded. Many of the people cannot read. A few people take dailies and some weeklies, but many no papers at all.

The people are poor and it is very hard for many to live in these times. Their needs are many and new calls for money come every day. It costs from forty to sixty cents per hundred for all freight that comes from the railroad and the same for every pound that is sent out to the station.

Their ministers are the typical mountain preachers and insufficiently trained to render

much help in the great hours through which we are passing.

On the first day of March, 1917, after an all-day drive from the railroad, Rev. Mr. Bouher came into this community. It was a great adventure. The people came to the mission in large congregations. The work covers the central church and six out stations. The native ministers were all preaching that "the end of the world was at hand."

At the first public meeting Mr. Bouher told them that we were in a "state of war" with the enemy and unless there was a great change we should be sending many of our sons across. This statement did not please the people. They called him a Yankee preacher. But when the War did come the people came in greater numbers. They did not understand why this was so. Then the selective draft! Things looked mighty bad. Half of all the services were given to the great subject of the hour—the War. The services might be said to be religio-patriotic-evangelistic. The pastor had whole congregations come forward and pledge themselves to Christian service and the flag till the end of the War. Wherever he heard of any dissatisfaction in the whole parish he hastened to the home and had a heart-to-heart talk with the people and sometimes service in their homes.

The day of registration came and with it many tears and heartaches to the people. Mr. Bouher was with them all day. Whole families came with "the boys." It was one of the busiest days of his life. Questions came fast from father, mother, brother, sister, wife, sweetheart, and friend. It was a great day. Many calls had to be made the following week.

Day by day, from home to home, and from schoolhouse to schoolhouse the religio-patriotic message was carried. The pastor's aim and prayer were to make this mission one hundred per cent American. The results were beyond all hopes. Not a single man held back. All were ready to do their bit. The "boys" went to the colors in high spirits and the men and women turned to the farms and other work with firm determination. Never were such crops raised before. As far as could be learned, every governmental regulation was complied with gladly. Men and women came to the mission to ask in regard to these things.

Then came the drives. How the people did it no one can tell. The Liberty Loans went "clean over the top" by several hundred dollars. Then came the "Y" drive. Many had never heard of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Red Cross. The assessment was $75. In just seven minutes they

were "over the top." The Red Cross came next. They were assessed $425. When the time was up $479.90 was in the bank.

Next came the War Stamp campaign. Six thousand dollars was asked. Mr. Bouher called the people to the mission at two P. M., and spoke to them for twenty minutes, and by four o'clock they had taken $6,300. So along all lines they had come to be classed as one hundred per cent Americans.

If there was a greater day than other days it must have been Memorial Day. The Sabbath after the President had given us his great Memorial Proclamation Mr. Bouher read it to the people and appointed a committee to make the service flag of the mission. There were twelve women of the mission who were the grandmothers, sisters, and sweethearts of the boys with the colors. It was a great week for these women.

Memorial Day dawned bright and clear. The very finger-tips of the mountains seemed to have entered into the inspiration of the day. The people in the valley and on the mountainside were all at work. The minister was sure the service would be a failure. But at ten o'clock in the morning, of one of the busiest days in the busiest month of the busiest year of the people's lives, they left their fields, their stores,

their shops, and the mills and were entering the mission. By ten-thirty the house was running over.

The first half hour was given to the school children and the young people of the community for a song and praise service. They sang "with the spirit" several patriotic songs. A young teacher read the President's Proclamation. Then a short prayer by one of the local ministers and the address of the morning by the minister of the mission followed.

Mrs. Yates, a widow living on a forty-acre homestead four miles over the mountains, approached the altar. She is the mother of four sons "somewhere over there." As Mrs. Yates reached the altar the congregation stood, and there were tears in many eyes as she presented the service flag of the mission, with twenty-seven stars. Mr. Ras Stamps read the honor roll of the twenty-seven names of the boys with the colors. The minister received the flag solemnly, and reverently dedicated it—"our boys, our fortunes, and ourselves"—to the sacred cause of democracy, humanity, and to God. Service flags were also presented to Mrs. Yates with four stars, to Mrs. Mayfield with three stars, and two flags with two stars each were given to two other mothers of two sons each with the colors. Since that day there have

been added other stars to the mission flag until now it contains forty-two stars.

After they had sung "Blest be the tie that binds," the people were dismissed and went to their homes with the joy of democracy "singing in their hearts." The Kingston community is one hundred per cent American for all time.[1]

For its size few congregations can equal the Grace Hill Moravian record. This congregation is in Washington County, Ia. The community, in common with much of rural Iowa, has lost in population. The membership of fifty-one is scattered. The church is the only one in a considerable radius and is accustomed to having its minister serve the whole community of perhaps two hundred souls in a narrowly religious way. How Grace Hill rose to its new opportunities under the leadership of Rev. Ernst Drebert is an inspiring story.

There have been sermons on conservation, citizenship, and the moral aims of the War. There is prayer for the soldiers and sailors every Sunday. The Bible school purchased a silk flag which is displayed in the church. The junior sermons make frequent reference to the national duties of boys and girls.

[1] This story, by E. H. Bouher, has just been published in pamphlet form by the Joint Committee on War Production Communities, 105 East 22nd St., New York, with the title, "One Hundred % American."

The Ladies' Aid Society of thirty members has been very active. It served lunch at a sale and held an icecream festival on the church lawn, the profits from both affairs going to the Red Cross. It bought a Liberty Bond. In the first year of the War the organization knitted thirty-three sweaters, eighteen pairs of socks, three pairs of wristlets, seven helmets, and a scarf. Each member also made a complete comfort clothes bag, containing all necessary clothing, shoes, and even thread, needles, soap, and towels for the French refugees.

The Boy Scouts helped in the community work for the church and the War, selling War Savings Stamps and doing similar service.

The food regulations caused some trouble for the hard-working farmers' wives, but the tally kept on the food cards supplied by the Food Administration showed that the required number of wheatless and meatless meals per week were being prepared in almost every home. So, too, the people were a little slow to grasp the idea of the Liberty Loan, although there were no slackers. In the last drives the community went over the top, as they also have done for the Red Cross and the Young Men's Christian Association. There have been generous contributions also to the war relief causes.

Early in 1918 a movement toward a com-

munity building was started where the activities of the community could center, especially its war work. The Ladies' Aid gave $500 and the pastor raised a like amount. The foundation and some of the other work have been contributed in voluntary labor. Socials, lectures, concerts, amateur plays, suppers, basket ball, and other indoor games will be some of the features in this building, which is neat, trim, and ample, though frame. The Ladies' Aid has a serving room and kitchen at one end. Despite all the work that this has meant, the farmers produced about thirty per cent more than in the previous year and everyone is paying the war taxes willingly.

Interdenominationally, also, the churches have not been inactive. The rural church section of the Committee on War-Time Work in the Local Church of the General War-Time Commission of the Churches, through the Commission on the Church and Social Service, and afterward the Joint Committee on War Production Communities, which consolidated this body and the Home Missions Council, accomplished much.

The first task was the issuing of a War Program for Country Churches, a pamphlet of sixteen pages, resulting from the suggestions of many leaders. An edition of 50,000 was

published, and 40,000 of these were sent under government frank to every minister, priest, and rabbi in charge of a rural congregation in the thirty-three northern and western states.

In addition, there was cooperation with the Southern Section of the Department of Agriculture, every minister, priest, and rabbi being reached with an official government letter through our office. A weekly news service to the religious press was maintained, stressing the moral and spiritual aspects of food production and possibilities of church groups aiding in the "win the war on the farm" effort.

At the suggestion of the Department of Labor a leaflet was prepared on "The Country Church and the City Boy," which was sent by the Government to every county leader of The Boys' Working Reserve. It was also made available for church use.

There was cooperation with other government departments and agencies, especially with the Council of National Defense, the Food Administration, the Bureau of Education, and the Committee on Public Information. Numerous letters have voiced the hearty official appreciation of the help given and the facility with which the entire Church could be marshalled for any given task.

It was at government suggestion, too, that

a number of conferences were held, at which the state agricultural leaders and the state religious leaders thought through the meaning of the War in rural terms and planned for closer cooperation. In all, eight of these gatherings were held. Most of them were coordinated with university summer school sessions and commanded large attendances.

At the request of the Red Cross, a body of suggestions as to the place of the Church in rural home service was collected. Criticism of material designed for rural Red Cross workers was asked for and freely given.

A nation-wide study of rural ministers was undertaken from the standpoint of their ability to speak at farmers' institutes, orchard demonstrations, etc., upon the spiritual and social aspects of country life. The response was splendid, about 1,400 men being reported by their overhead denominational officials. Every one of the State Departments of Agriculture desired to have the list for its own state, and many report that they are using these men with great satisfaction. A few State Boards of Health have also requested that these lists be furnished to them.

A second nation-wide study of rural ministers was made through the County Agents of the Department of Agriculture on the basis

of the war service of rural churches. A standard of judgment was drawn up, and the agents were asked to nominate churches which they felt had attained this standard. The nominations are now being checked up, and the churches which have reached the standard are being designated as Rural Liberty Churches in recognition of the war service rendered. Although replies are still coming in, thus far there have been nearly three hundred nominations. The plan includes making these centers demonstration points. They will be used in cooperation with the Government in working out local problems in after-the-war adjustments in so far as the church can function in them. This cooperation includes assistance to soldiers in getting back to the land. The plan has received the cordial commendation both of President Wilson and of the Hon. D. F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture. The denominational home mission boards are also greatly interested, and have planned to give these churches special aid in meeting their problems.

This investigation is revealing more than was anticipated. The ministers often give their problems and their suggestions. The County Agents have shown a keen appreciation of the possibilities of community service by

the church, but never forget her fundamental spiritual task. Best of all, they have mirrored church conditions in their counties.

Scores of individual churches have been aided with advice as to their individual problems. Cooperation has been extended at conferences of various kinds. Helpful relations exist between the work for this rural church department and the Y M C A, Y W C A, state federations of churches, State Sunday School Associations, the National Board of Farm Organizations, and similar agencies.

And so, from far-off parishes miles from the railroad or buried in the mountains or near to the urban centers of food distribution, to the great metropolis where the national denominational offices are located, as well as their overhead organization the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the country church has met the war demands and is preparing for the new world order.

X

THE COUNTRY CHURCH IN RECONSTRUCTION

CHAPTER X

THE COUNTRY CHURCH IN RECONSTRUCTION

And now the War is over. The forces of righteousness have triumphed. The faith of multitudes has been vindicated. The anxieties of four immeasurably long years have left us. The world is free and safe from its old enemy, but the future lies ahead. The tasks of peace are even more difficult than those of war. "The morrow of victory," said Mazzini, "is more perilous than its eve." "Gentlemen," said Clemenceau to the Senators of France, "we are now coming to a difficult time. It is harder to win peace than to win war."

In the high endeavors of the new age that has come upon us, in the untiring effort to make democracy worthy of the sacrifices so freely poured out in her name, we can but look to the same eternal Father-God who has been our trust through these dark years, and to those agencies of His Kingdom, the churches of the world, for through them must be worked out, under the Spirit's guidance, the measures that will prove effective for the needs of our new day.

In the winning of the War the Church played no inconsiderable part. Its ministry to the spirit, its work of religious education, went on silently but powerfully. The fullest cooperation was given to all war causes. Men and means were offered. The entire machinery of the Church, down to the last rural congregation, was placed at the disposal of the Government. The preachers of the land were a great army sustaining the morale of the nation. The coming of peace in no way lessens these responsibilities. The period of demobilization and the immediate tasks of reconstruction will demand all the insight, patriotism, and sacrifice that men have to give.

The danger is that thousands of people will think that their tasks are done and that they can go back to other things. The pastor must lead the way to a larger view. The war-time committee of the church, if it has had one, should by all means be continued. Its war functions must be kept up until the last man has been returned to civilian life. This includes organized correspondence, preparation of packages, and similar services for the men and applies especially to those who may have to be retained in Europe in an army of occupation. These men will need such work even more than in war time.

Each committee should secure some permanent memorial for the men of its church who have served in Army or Navy and for the men and women who have helped the cause through such channels as the Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, Red Cross, and the like. The framed honor roll might be such a memorial. A tablet set in imperishable bronze would be better. In rural communities this might well include all from the neighborhood. The service flag, too, should be kept always, displayed on appropriate occasions and left as a trophy to our children's children. An effective community memorial would be to plant a tree on church or school grounds or along the village street for each man who has entered the service.

If the war-time committee has not already done so, it should at once begin the collection and study of the letters of the men in the service. In rural communities this could well be made a common effort. These letters contain much human interest material, incidents, and sidelights which never saw newspaper publicity, but which are of value in estimating the character of the contribution made. If the committee could either edit these letters or secure someone to do so, it would have material for

a pamphlet of great local value, setting forth the contribution of each church or community to the winning of the great struggle.

The war-time committee will have a real opportunity for service in arranging for the welcome of the returned soldier. In the rural community the church may be the only agency to draw attention to the significance of his return. Each man should have a real welcome back into the regular life of the community and church. He should be challenged to take up his share of the tasks which look toward a better church and community life. He should be made to realize the kinship of these things with those for which he has been fighting. Every opportunity must be given for the returned soldier or sailor to give the local church the benefit of his viewpoint. He has come back with a world consciousness. He has a contribution to make and nothing should hinder his making it.

Where the men have any unusual capacity for leadership the challenge to service should be a direct appeal to the giving of life to the tasks of religion. Even before the men return, pastors and committees should bring the possibilities of the ministry and its allied callings to the attention of men who have not fully determined upon their life work.

The war-time committee will have real opportunity to serve in helping some of the returned men to secure employment. If we have really appreciated the victory, this help will be extended to those few who may need it.

Every assistance will be given to those who feel permanently the effects of wounds, but such help must not deprive the man of his initiative. Reeducation can accomplish wonders and the committee, in cooperation with the Red Cross, can help the man to find himself anew and hence to give to the world the fruits of a useful and self-respecting life. Many of the families of these men and of others who though not wounded have been physically or morally disabled from other causes, will need the deepest solicitude and pastoral care.

The War has brought into the clear light of day the complete dependence of the world upon the farmer. Those were solemn words that the President used when he said, "Upon the farmers of the country, therefore, in large measure, rest the fate of the War and the fate of nations." The farmer did not fail. The prayer of the earth's millions, at home and abroad, is that generous harvests may continue to give all the bread that will stave off impending famine and give heart to nations newly born. The food reserves of the world are gone. They

cannot be restored to normal for half a decade. The Church must see that the farmer does not lose the sense that he is "a worker together with God" in supplying the people with the prayed-for daily bread. It will be some time before conditions are normal. The labor situation is still far from ideal. Fertilizers and seeds are unusually expensive. Stock feeds are almost prohibitive in price. There is need for continued patience until the readjustments back to a peace basis are made. Some of the steps necessary for such readjustment are the following:

1. The farmers should be made to realize the absolute need of increasing the food supply still further, as their part of the duty we all share in the remaking of the world—a task hungry peoples cannot perform.

2. How waste may be eliminated in field and home should be emphasized. Demonstrators can be secured from your state college of agriculture. Boys' and girls' clubs or Sunday school classes can take on corn or canning club work as a part of their program. The County Agent will help.

3. The fullest cooperation should be promoted on the part of all farmers with farm bureaus, agricultural colleges, boards of agriculture, the United States Government, and similar agencies.

4. Emergency laborers, especially lads from the schools and colleges, must be helped to understand their duty to their employers and to the community for faithful work and clean living as their contribution to the great task. On the other hand, these boys and young men should have fair treatment, kindly sympathy, wholesome recreation.

5. The spirit of cooperative enterprise in each community should be developed wherever possible, in order that new methods of working together in production, saving, and selling of food may be developed and made effective.

6. The Church should make Food Sunday a permanent, annual day. The spiritual significance of food, gained through the War, should never be lost. See Ezekiel 4: 9ff., John 6: 12, Matt. 6: 11.

7. As never before, each church should be a true community church, which shall support all good words and works, and aid in every possible way to bring hope and blessing to all the souls within the neighborhood. Let each church search its heart to see if it be really and truly democratic, brotherly, Christian. The more also it can be made a social gathering place and a center for meetings of the community, the better. If the end of the War could be made the occasion

for closer work in homes and with individuals, reaching to the most distant in the countryside, and caring especially for boys and girls, so that none be left unshepherded, we should have a new era of religious influence.

8. There must be the closest cooperation between churches. No sectarian program can satisfy in the new age. The emphasis must be Christian. A divisive spirit will cast discredit upon religion. The necessities of the Kingdom must be a more powerful consideration than the advancement of any particular church organization. It would be well if such temporary federations as have been effected could be made permanent.

9. The emphasis of the Church must be upon a forward-looking program. This is especially true in connection with the moral training and discipline of children and young people. They must be strengthened against the social turmoil of the era into which we are entering, and which will demand so much of them in the way of leadership.

10. The Church must be ready to welcome into its community new families of returned soldiers, perhaps new to farming as a vocation, new to the ideals and practices of the community, needing Christian neighborliness in scores of ways, and yet having a definite

contribution to make to the community life.

11. The country preacher must realize the vital importance of his pulpit, and in season and out of season preach the necessity of keeping the world safe and of making democracy ever more Christian. The most ideal world order will collapse if it is not sustained by the Christian conviction of the world's multitudes. Peace and reconstruction give new urgency to such ideals and issues as these: that each soul must be brought into a saving relationship with Jesus for service; that a world Kingdom of God means a family of nations living in peace and good will; that America must not forget that sacrifice is the law of salvation in personal character and in national life; that it is our great task to see that American rural work and life, as well as urban work and life, shall become and remain truly free, democratic, and Christian.

In his task the preacher commands new forces to help him. The drives of the war period have reached down almost to the last farm house. The horizons of farmers who before the War took only the weekly county paper have been extended by thousands of miles. The farmer has given as never before in the history of the nation, given labor, men,

means, in a spirit of cheerful sacrifice, consecrated service, humble generosity. The country minister who can sustain this spirit until it becomes the permanent atmosphere of his church and community will have brought the Kingdom nearer.

As long as a man in the American uniform remains in Europe, the Red Cross and the various relief agencies, such as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the American Library Association, the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army, will need men and women and funds for special work. There will need to be special activities for men under arms in America during the period of demobilization. As these appeals are made, the Church must cooperate and help to make the people understand that because peace has come these needs have not yet ceased to exist.

The Civilian Relief or Home Service division of the Red Cross will probably call for the longest period of cooperation with the Church in reestablishing those men or families that, for one reason or another, have suffered most through the exigencies of war. The primary importance of this service must never be lost sight of, no matter how engrossing the tasks of peace become.

Similarly the Church can help the Government by explaining the continued necessity for taxes, saving stamps, and one or two more bond issues. The great machinery built up for the winning of the War cannot be stopped as quickly as the hostilities ceased. The War must be paid for. It is a privilege to pay taxes that have this end in view. War Savings Stamps Clubs organized in Sunday school classes, young people's societies, and the like should be extended and continued. The discipline of thrift is still needed.

The gravest social problems are likely to arise during the reconstruction period. The whole question of the relationship of labor and capital will have to be adjusted. The matter of price regulation and the control of food speculation will have to be settled. The economic injustices that have oppressed parts of the rural population of America will demand righting.

It would be a distinct public service if pastors were to bring in men who know these fields to address the people and to arouse intelligent, constructive discussion and study. Evening services or weekday evenings might occasionally be devoted to this purpose, or better yet a monthly Sunday afternoon community mass meeting could be so used.

There may be a swing toward conservatism such as often follows war, with the temptation to appeal to force. Sectional and class interests may clash and the morale of individuals and communities be weakened by just that much. The Church must insist as never before on its social program and that social program must be stated in terms that are rural and agricultural as well as those which are urban and industrial. It must sustain its program by pastoral visitation. It must base it on the solid rock of Christianity as the only saving religion for the individual and for society. Whatever community weaknesses appear, there the local church must be ready with the better way, the way of forbearance, of love, of patriotism.

One of the biggest assets in meeting the social problems of the new era which has been born lies in the machinery that has been organized during the War. Thousands of men and millions of women have given time in unselfish service for others that before the War they never dreamed that they had. The drives, the Red Cross work, a score of other things, have all combined to draw people out of themselves. It is unthinkable that this capacity shall not be turned into new channels of effort. Some of the great missionary so-

cieties were organized immediately after the Civil War. During the Great War gifts for missions have increased in both England and America. People have caught a glimpse of those things which are essential. Every church should aim to challenge each worker in the war field with a task adequate to his or her power and ability in the regular work of the church or community. If the task does not exist, it should be created. If there is no immediate vision of possibilities, a survey could be taken and the resulting program will capture the service of these workers. Certainly all such men and women could be utilized at once in meeting just such problems as have been sketched above.

During the fall of 1918 the author carried on correspondence with most of the County Farm Bureau Agents of the Federal Department of Agriculture in regard to the Rural Liberty Churches described elsewhere in this book. Many of them have stated their views as to the right sort of a country church. Two things are significant. The first is that these trained laymen believe in the social application of the Gospel in the action and program of the country church, as well as its interpretation from the pulpit. The second is this, that they insist strongly on the personal

fundamentals of the Church's program. Correspondence with the pastors of the churches finally designated as Rural Liberty Churches has also come in. These pastors agree substantially with the laymen, but they go a step further. They inveigh against the restrictions of over churching, of denominational machinery, of overlapping or undermanning, of a half dozen other things which handicap the fullest Christian work in the open country and which are rooted in the evils of ecclesiasticism. These men are irritated by acute local situations, many of them. They have failed to realize the splendid strides that have been made by the great denominational mission boards in cooperation during the last years. But with all allowance for the fine brotherliness of the national officers, these laymen and pastors alike point to the sorest spot in rural church organization. No state or district officer, with his eye on "the man higher up" who is to be duly impressed with a statistical report once a twelvemonth, must longer be permitted to balk the natural adjustments that would come in many a community if local leadership and initiative were given full scope. This outside control in community church life is too often unchristian and as exerted at present it is very frequently

undemocratic and un-American. Unless it is curbed, the country church life of the new era will face an all but insurmountable handicap.

Rather must the great denominations unite in a demand for social justice for the farmer, as they have already united in their demands for the city laborer. They must exert the power of Christian opinion in the influencing of legislation affecting rural life in such ways that the Church, too, is concerned. They must be prepared to work cooperatively at solving the rural problem. They must be ready to enter and serve as one the new rural communities which will spring up on the reclaimed lands to be opened up by the Department of the Interior, where no denominationalism of the unworthy type will be permitted, either by the great national home mission boards or by the Government.

The world is agreed that the War was brought on by the greed of men and nations for material wealth and power. The great pronouncements of the British Labor Party and similar bodies in many countries show the determination of the common people to have a new world in which the swords of the soldiers shall be beaten into the ploughshares of an adequate agriculture. The soldiers have cherished the hope that they were fighting

in a war to end war. The ideal of the League of Nations has become an issue in practical politics and diplomacy. The world has never had a greater fund of moral passion and idealism with which to combat evil and selfishness. The supreme opportunity of the Church, in local community as in national relationships, is in utilizing and marshaling these forces into effective unity of purpose and action. The only way to avoid a worse tragedy in the future is to capitalize this feeling to effect "a change in the heart of the world so that the desire for acquisition, personal and national, shall be supplanted by a devotion to human welfare and social progress." This supreme opportunity can be met only by an inspired and tremendously active church, a church practicing this principle in all its branches, a church of power in pulpit and in pew, a church of prayer, a church that, in the face of unexampled demands, sees that the victory that ever overcomes the world is *faith.*

XI

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE CITY BOY

CHAPTER XI

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND THE CITY BOY

The War has given impetus to an industrial experiment in agriculture which will have far-reaching social effects. This experiment concerns itself with the bringing of city lads out to the farms to assist in the harvesting of the crops. The movement began years ago in the annual summer westward march of college boys to the wheat fields of the great central states. Many of the city-born men in our agricultural colleges during the last decade have come there because of experi nce gained in such work which gave them a new idea of the possibilities of farming.

With the great scarcity of farm laborers of these war years, this voluntary and comparatively small movement has been expanded and made official in the creation by the Department of Labor of the Boys' Working Reserve.

It has sought to enlist city boys of high school age in farm service during their summer vacations. Last summer between a quarter and a half million boys responded to the

appeal and did their best on the "second line of defense"—the production of food. Some of these boys lived in camps under conditions bordering on military discipline, with a program of work and recreation directed by experienced camp leaders, usually Y M C A men. Thousands of other boys were scattered in groups of from two to five on individual farms. In such cases the boys were under official supervisors and these in turn under a county official, usually the county agent. These boys are all average, live, healthy, fun-loving city boys. They bring with them the background of the city, the ideas, customs, desires, and experiences of the city. Their first summer especially is something entirely new for them. It means adjustment to a new type of life. Out of the experience there may come an understanding of farm life, economic and social, which will never be lost and which will help in the welding together of the nation in the years that lie ahead.

It will be half a decade at least before agriculture is normal and the food reserves of the world restored. If the Boys' Working Reserve is made permanent, it is hard to estimate the physical, economic, and social good that can be accomplished. But this movement

means more than an adjustment of the city boy to rural life. It means also that those to whom these boys have come will have to get accustomed to them. In this twofold adjustment, so freighted with possibilities for good, where successfully accomplished, the country church can play an important part. It will not be, however, by preaching nor by indicating to those concerned the deeper issues involved that the most effective work can be done, but rather by everyday commonplace neighborliness.[1]

Get in touch with the boys immediately upon their arrival in the community. A letter of welcome combined with a hearty personal touch will win. The representative of the church should be someone with tact, personality, and ease of manner. Invite them to Sunday school and church services, furnishing special autos for them the first Sunday or two and regularly if necessary. Shape the teaching and work in the church and Sunday school to make its appeal to the boys, to interpret religion to them in terms of the life they lead. The country church must realize its great opportunity and must measure up to the boy's ideas of what the church is.

[1] With this principle the following program amplified from a former leaflet of the author's is offered.

Foresee and forestall any friction between city and country boys. Take particular pains to get the boys in touch with the young people's societies and with the social life of the community, provided that life is wholesome. Watch and safeguard the relations between city boys and country girls. This is especially important. The easy assurance of the average city boy "will take" with the rural lassie and may mean far more to her than to him. The city boy must not be allowed to urbanize the thoughts and desires of the native young people. Provide special means of entertainment for the boys on week ends, such as baseball games, hikes, swimming parties, and volleyball, in which the boys of the neighborhood and the boys from the city can mingle and get well acquainted. Where three or four boys are living on one farm, it would be well to urge the building of a tennis court

Now and then difficulties may arise between the farmer and the boy. There are bad farmers and there are lazy boys. Where a pastor learns of such he should have the official supervisor take the matter up, cooperating himself when necessary.

Place good reading matter in the hands of the boys, such as the *Youth's Companion*, *The Scientific American*, *The Literary Digest*,

and other papers of similar character. It is not likely that many of them will care for distinctly religious reading, but they will appreciate the right kind of sex-education books such as, for instance, W. S. Hall's "From Youth to Manhood." They will also devour the best type of war books.

Wherever there is a county Y M C A, the church should work in close cooperation with its secretary. Cooperation between the church and the local Federal authorities in all matters is assumed. In some such ways as these the beginnings of a fruitful relationship between city and country can be worked out under the leadership and watchful care of the Christian Church.

XII

REACTIONS FROM THE GREAT WAR

CHAPTER XII

REACTIONS FROM THE GREAT WAR

In a certain sense this book deals entirely with reactions from the Great War, but there remain a number of possible developments which need to be considered.

Everyone, no matter how superficially interested, knows that the War has recalled the world to a knowledge of the fundamental importance of agriculture. No nation can succeed which has not a strong, efficient, productive rural life. This has been one of the sources of German strength, carefully prepared in advance. England, on the other hand, had imported more than half her food before the War and less than twenty-five per cent of this importation came from her colonies. She had consciously allowed the decline of her agriculture for the sake of her manufacturing interests. She accepted the military risks which such a course involved and overlooked the social dangers. England paid the price and her example is one America should heed. City and country, agriculture and industry are interdependent. "The farmer feeds us all." No nation is safe when its agricultural interests

and population decrease. When each great division of production is properly balanced, prosperity and national safety result. When the manufacturing population becomes by far the predominant element, the state is unstable both economically and socially. It is liable not only to food shortage, but also to comparatively violent fluctuations of employment which may affect all industries at once. It has lost an industry which can absorb some of the unemployed in cases of necessity. It has deprived itself of those contributions which an effective rural life can always make toward national well-being. These things the War has brought home with startling clearness. America will not neglect her rural problems in the future as she has done in the past. This is one of the War's gains.

Another development which may be expected is the reclamation of land. Two-thirds of rural America is as yet lying in unimproved land. There are those who believe that agriculture as a life in the open, as a struggle, and as a profession, will meet the need of the returned soldier who no longer cares to be behind the counter or desk. To procure the land for the returned soldier reclamation must be resorted to. Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane has already an-

nounced that his department will undertake this work. Congress has appropriated $200,000 for preliminary surveys. This land will, roughly, include burnt-over timber areas, unimproved forest land, dry regions that can be made fertile by irrigation, and swamp lands, as in Florida, which can be drained. It will give a temporary outlet for labor should a surplus exist after the War. There is no real reason why America with her limitless resources should import beef from Argentina and Australia, and yet this we had begun to do before the War. If, either because they choose to or because the Government establishes them on the land, or for both reasons, many of our returned soldiers take up agricultural pursuits, we may not only expect a reestablished equilibrium between city and country in America, but also an expanded agriculture and a larger public interest in the economic and social welfare of the farmer. It is not likely that the plans will work out speedily enough nor that enough men will take up these farms to cause overproduction and consequent agricultural panic. This must be prevented. The Church, however, must be prepared to enter any areas which may be settled under this plan.

The question of how to take care of the

soldiers after the War who may wish to engage in agriculture is a large one. A quarter or a half million men cannot be fitted easily into the present organization of American rural life. One effect of the War should be more intensive cultivation. Germany, with poorer soil, obtained far larger yields per acre in all the staple crops than we. America's farming has been too superficial, too much for the first values of the land. If men could be grouped on our large middle-western farms, or on estates too large to be held unproductive, under efficient and trained management, an intensive cultivation of the soil, as well as a greater diversification of farming, would be possible. This process could be developed up to the point where the additional production unit per man would fall below the labor cost of that man to the farm. There are those who would form colonies of the soldier farmers with the small farm as the unit, since intensive cultivation would be demanded to make the farm pay. From the social standpoint there are advantages in that plan, but from the agricultural it will hardly succeed unless the closest sort of cooperation in buying, selling, and the use of farm machinery is developed. Probably we shall have a great increase in cooperation in rural America, for the War has

taught the farmers their power and given them a feeling of solidarity.

But if the soldier is sent out to the new reclaimed lands in any numbers, a problem new to this generation of rural thinkers will arise. Such action will call for the construction of a new social organization. There will have to be communities containing new homes, new schools, new churches ministering to men who have the background of France and all that that means. After the War a situation in rural America bids fair to arise comparable only to that which the War called into being in the War production communities during the struggle itself. Here new cities sprang out of the wilderness, as at Nitro, W. Va. Cities doubled their populations. Seventy-five reported bad congestion. Country towns became centers of shipbuilding, and their sleepy hundreds became bustling thousands, thousands that had left comfortable homes, friends, and familiar places in response to the appeal for war workers.

It was impossible in the new centers to think of churching this population by unrelated denominational effort, even had the Government permitted it. The solution was the formation of Liberty Churches under the control of a Joint Committee representing the

practical consolidation of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Home Missions Council for this special effort. Different denominational boards have underwritten one or more of these church organizations, not in their own behalf, but for the good of the joint work. The Protestant Church as such makes its approach to these people. The minister is surrounded by a staff of trained specialists. The closest cooperation is maintained with the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the whole scheme being worked out and approved by the Ordnance Bureau of the War Department. Some such plan as this will have to be made effective if new rural regions are opened up.

These churches will minister to men who have seen religion in trench and camp. Their churches will have to be the highest type of country churches, pledged to an all-round program based on the imperatives of spiritual leadership and community service in the name of God's love. These churches will influence all others in America and to their force will be added the weight of the influence of such men who will go back to their home communities and established churches. These men must see and will see the possibilities of the

new country church in its relation to the Commonwealth of God and they will supply from their ranks the leadership which will revitalize rural life in America.

There is another whole world of problems growing out of the situation of which but one illustration can be given. It is generally supposed that the Civil War introduced typhoid fever into rural America. Formerly it had been largely an urban disease. In France today men from every continent are mingling and they are digging into the soil of forty centuries. What a battle of microbes is ensuing! What new diseases may spring into virulent being none can tell. Certainly there is danger of an increase in tuberculosis. At the same time thousands of men are getting new ideas of sanitary precaution and practices, and after the War, together with the new sense of the value of human life which has been developed, we ought to look for improved sanitary practice. The church can assist in this by helping to show the sin of impure milk, poor ventilation, and the other things that breed microbes. "Heal the sick."

So then, out of the War we can hope for the larger development of an abundant life in the open country, which shall include education, morals, living, farming, and religion,

and which shall help perhaps to fulfil literally the prophecy of old, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks."

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

War Standard for Rural Liberty Churches

1. A church in a community in the open country or in a village of less than 2,500 population which has one half its membership from families actively engaged in farming.

2. The pastor, rector, or priest is resident; that is, he lives within half a mile of the church building in which he ministers.

3. The pastor, with the support of his church, is active in the support of the Government in all measures looking to the War, particularly the subscription of bonds and other securities of the Government, the contributions to the Red Cross, the agencies engaged in the sevenfold drive and in Food and Fuel Conservation.

4. The Liberty Church and its pastor are active in all concerns of the community; that is of the region within easy access by drive to the church and in promoting the betterment of all the people; especially the problems of education, of health, and of economic welfare.

5. The Liberty Church displays Service and National Flags and an honor roll of its men in the service.

6. It maintains regular correspondence with the soldiers and sailors of its membership.

7. It helps the drafted men to prepare for their new experience.

8. Its pastor preaches at least one sermon a month upon patriotic subjects such as Food Production and Conservation, the moral aims of the War, the care of the returned wounded, and the general aspects of patriotism.

9. The church and its organizations co-operate with the county agents of the State and Federal Departments of Agriculture, the Boys' Working Reserve, the Red Cross, and similar agencies.

10. The Liberty Church will realize the definite needs which it must meet by a survey of its area.

11. The Liberty Church is keen in its service of sympathy for wounded soldiers and broken families.

12. The Liberty Church is active in the Americanization of aliens and of immature and disaffected citizens.

13. The Liberty Church will show the same vision and ability in meeting the tasks of reconstruction that it has displayed in the war work.

This Standard was endorsed as follows by the President and Secretary Houston:

Department of Agriculture
Washington
October 26, 1918.

Dr. Edmund deS. Brunner,
Rural Secretary, General War Time
Commission,
Federal Council of the Churches of
Christ in America,
105 East 22nd Street, New York
City, N. Y.

DEAR SIR:

I have your letter of October 15th, enclosing a statement of the standards and requirements for a "Rural Liberty Church," to be designated by your organization. The Department of Agriculture welcomes the cooperation of your organization, the churches, the schools, and such other institutions in the forwarding of war work, especially in work relating to the Department's activities to secure larger production and fuller conservation, and in its general task of making rural life profitable, healthful, and attractive. It seems to me that the church which will adopt and apply the standards set forth by you would render highly useful service. The activities of the ministers and the members of the country churches in the directions indicated in support of the plans of agricultural forces would prove helpful and valuable.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) D. F. Houston,
Secretary.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington
2 November, 1918.

MY DEAR BISHOP McDOWELL:

The plans and purposes of the Rural Liberty Church programme are certainly most welcome and important additions to the enterprise of drawing the nation together into a single loyal team of workers for the interests of the nation and of the world. I am very much obliged to you for calling my attention to them and am very glad to send my cordial greetings to this additional organization of workers.

Cordially and sincerely yours,
(Signed) Woodrow Wilson.

Bishop William F. McDowell, D.D.
1509 Sixteenth St., N. W.
Washington, D. C.

APPENDIX II

APPENDIX II

Preliminary Suggested Peace Standard for Rural Churches

1. A church in a community in the open country or in a village of less than 2,500 population which has one half its membership from families actively engaged in farming.

2. The pastor, rector, or priest is resident, that is, he lives within access to the church building in which he ministers.

3. The church is equipped for its ministry by a careful survey of its field.

4. The church has a definite program of service including

- Worship and preaching.
- Purposeful pastoral visitation.
- Organized graded Bible school.
- Enlistment and training of leadership.
- Ministry to special groups—boys, men, women, girls, tenants, and others.
- Adequate provision for recreation and social life.
- Definite, cordial cooperation with other churches of the community.

5. The church and its organizations cooperate with the county agents, the State and Federal Departments of Agriculture, the Boys' Working Reserve, the Red Cross, and similar agencies.

6. The Liberty Church and its pastor are active in all concerns of the community—that is, of the region within easy access by drive to the church—and in promoting the common interests of all people, especially the problems of education, of social and economic welfare, of health, and of home conditions.

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